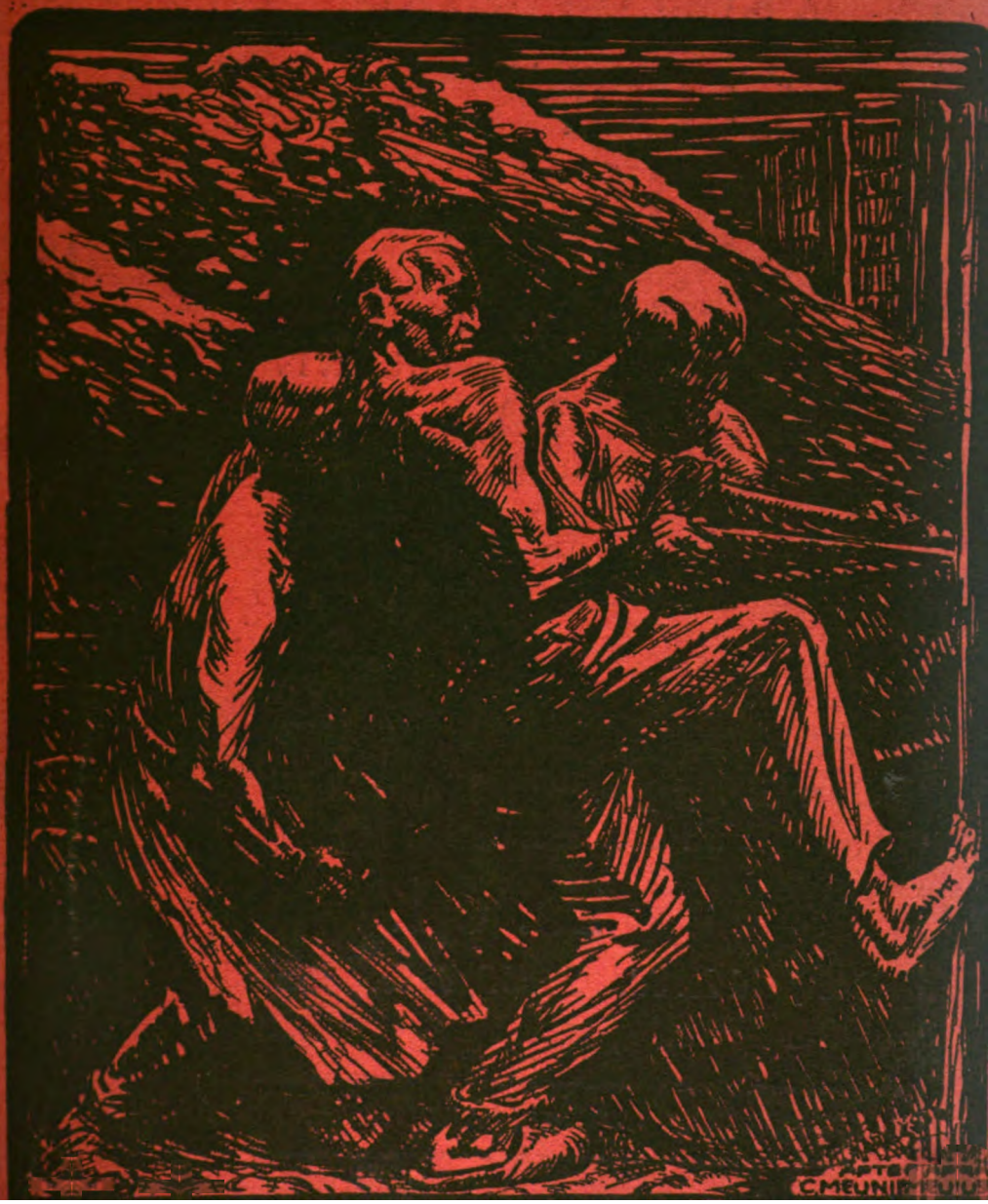
THE PLEBS

November 1923 Sixpence



The Organ of the National Council of Labour Colleges

THE PLEBS

I can promise to be candid but not impartial.

Vol. XV November, 1923 No. 11

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OUR POINT of VIEW

THE recent correspondence in the *Daily Herald* on the subject of Working Class Education was, as the *Herald* itself remarked when applying the closure, "disappointing." But that was very largely the *Herald's* own fault. The leading article with which it opened the ball, and the headlines which it put on the letters day by day, made "Bias—For or Against" the question at issue; and so succeeded in sending about half of the disputants up a side-line. To ordinary people "bias" means deliberate distortion; and accordingly a whole lot of innocent folk who had obviously never heard of such a thing as a class struggle—let alone connected it in any way with Education in

actual fact—wrote platitudinous epistles protesting that deliberate distortion in teaching was a shocking thing. So, of course, it is. And it hardly needed a newspaper controversy to emphasise it.

The really fundamental question to be settled in any discussion of working-class education is the question, not of bias, but of *aim*.

What are we AIMING At?

What does the workers' movement, as a movement, want of the education it supports or subsidises? That issue was raised quite definitely in the excellent contribution from Arthur Woodburn, of the Scottish Labour College, which provoked the *Herald* discussion; the heading of which was "What Matters in Education—Labour Must have a Definite *Aim*." That is a real issue which divides the rival schools of working-class educationists. We of the Labour College movement are out for an education which will make revolutionists. Our opponents of the Workers' Educational Association want to turn out "citizens" — of a capitalist state. We regard working-class education as a weapon. They look upon it as a sort of clean collar—to be added unto the unwashed proletarian as a mark of respectability. That section of the Labour movement which aspires to respectable citizenship, in clean collars, will support the one; the section which realises the fact of the class struggle will support the other.

A discussion on the question of what the *aim* of working-class education should be might have been helpful in clearing the air of a lot of fog. The discussion on "bias" made the fog rather thicker. But it had a practical moral for us Plebeians as propagandists. We have perforce concentrated so hard and so long on exposing the hollowness of our opponents' boasted "impartiality," that we have tended sometimes to exalt "bias" as a sort of aim in itself—a mark of proletarian virtue. Now we are *not* biassed for bias's sake. We are biassed—or, rather, what our opponents call biassed—(i) because the facts of history seem to us to teach a quite definite lesson to the workers, and (ii) because our aim is to be of use to the workers' movement in its present struggle against oppression and exploitation. But we make a big mistake, and do definite harm to our own movement, if in our propaganda of *Independent* Working-Class Education we put "Bias" on our banner. The already class-conscious worker may be attracted by that slogan. But we aim at getting hold of the man or woman who is not yet class-conscious, and at making him so. And the plain fact is that he, or she, usually has a (quite praiseworthy) feeling that "bias" is to be deprecated. What we can tell him, and tell him perfectly truthfully, is that we are the only *unbiassed* people

A Moral for Plebs

—the only people who have looked the facts honestly in the face and have no scruple about declaring outright what the facts appear to us to teach ; having no interests to serve, or institutions to pre-serve, by concealing anything. And we shall appeal to him much more successfully by doing so.

The Reorganisation of Labour

We invite serious attention to the contributions by Comrades Barker and Lawther. It has been our boast that we were thinking-fighters and fighting-thinkers. Our main task is to give a definite working-class view point on social and economic matters and this must perforce be general. But the social sciences can, and must be, applied. The present state of the Industrial Labour movement especially cries aloud for an application of the general knowledge and conscious purpose our class-work supplies. " Organisation by industry " and " workers' control " remain uselessly suspended in mid-air unless endeavours are made to survey the difficulties and problems arising from both. Here our readers and classes could help. We suggest that the older students of the Labour Colleges could well carry through a survey of the position in particular industries—the obstacles which block the way to closer unity between existing unions, the part each industry would play in any reorganised society and how it could be best administered. Discussions could take place in PLEBS and publication could follow.

Let this be our way of avoiding " sterile Marxism." Let us make *present* history and not merely understand *past*.

Our New Textbook

The Economic Geography Textbook—see announcement on p. ii of cover—will be published this month. We want to appeal here for some definite organised support from the N.C.L.C. districts between now and the date of publication. The Plebs League is numerically only a fraction of the whole N.C.L.C. movement. It gets no subsidy from that movement, and it does not share in the grants made by Trade Unions for educational purposes. Yet it has to undertake a highly important—and financially heavy—part of our educational work ; particularly in the provision of textbooks. It is up to the districts of the N.C.L.C., for whose use the textbooks are issued, to assist us as far as they are able by canvassing for orders for the new book NOW, and by sending us, before November 22nd, guaranteed orders, accompanied by at any rate part of the cash. Like the rest of our movement the Plebs League carries on mainly by voluntary work. No one but the printer and the block-maker get paid anything for their share in the production of the textbooks. But the cost of production, even when confined to those one or two

items, is heavy ; *and it has to be met pretty quickly.* That is to say, the Plebs League has to find the money within a month or two which it will only, in the ordinary course of events, get back from the N.C.L.C. classes during the next twelve months.

Now, if, as is surely the case, the issuing of textbooks is a matter of importance to our whole movement, then it is not too much to ask that the whole movement will shoulder its share of the financial responsibility by ordering a stock of the new book, and *by paying for it as promptly as possible.* This, we suggest, is a matter for districts and divisional committees to discuss ; and not one to be left entirely to the individual initiative—and risk—of literature secretaries. And we appeal to district secretaries to put this question of organised support for the textbooks—for *this* textbook, *now*—on the agenda of the first possible committee meeting.

To individual Plebs we appeal, as before, to do their darnedest to make the Geography Book beat our previous records.

The (Central) Labour College

Readers will have noted, in the London Labour College Students' Association " Notes " last month, and again this month, references to the fact that the students' agitation for a Committee of Inquiry into the administration, curriculum, etc., of the College, has been successful. The two controlling Unions have both agreed to the suggestion, and we understand that each has appointed three representatives to the Committee. We believe we are only expressing a very widespread feeling in the I.W.C.E. movement in congratulating the two Executives on having taken this course. The efficiency of the " parent " College is a matter of concern to all of us. The PLEBS has already taken a hand in criticising its curriculum. We sincerely hope that the Committee's activities will result, not only in added efficiency at the College itself, but also in a more widespread interest in its work on the part of the rank and file of the two Unions principally concerned.

Please note:

The October No. of The PLEBS

was

SOLD OUT

by the middle of the month.

If you want to increase your order, *do it early*.

Should the POWERS of the T.U.C. GENERAL COUNCIL be increased?

No question is of more vital moment to the British Labour Movement to-day than that of more effective industrial organisation. The proposal to increase the powers of the T.U.C. General Council raises the whole issue of Class Solidarity versus Sectional Interests. We have asked Geo. Barker, M.P., and Will Lawther (Labour Party Executive) to open a discussion on the subject in our pages.

SHOULD the powers of the Trades Union Congress General Council be augmented to deal effectively with trade disputes and other conditions of Labour?

I think nearly every delegate who attended the Trade Union Congress at Plymouth was convinced of the utter futility of the whole proceedings. Never in modern history have the workers been more in need of the help of their organisation; never has it been so important to aid them. The *New Statesman* described the Congress as a "bad Congress"—the *New Leader* called it "most depressing." Shinwell said "it was the most hopeless Congress on record," and I fully agree with him.

Yet there were 702 delegates there, representing 4,369,268 Trade Unionists—so there was no lack of power. There was enough power to get justice for the workers or to shake the economic foundations of society. But there was no machinery to use it, no cohesive action possible, nothing else to be done but pass resolutions, re-assemble and pass some more! What a tragic farce!

The Report of the General Council will be an important historical document revealing the devastation of the peace. It will be necessary to quote from it in order to show the need of the Congress to do something that it ought to have the power to do but has not.

> "It has been estimated that the total amount now being spent on unemployment by the State and local authorities is approximately £100,000,000 a year. . . . The extensive character of extreme destitution is shown by the following amounts of Poor Law expenditure from rates alone:—
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | 1913–14 .. .. | £12,060,000 |
> | 1920–21 .. .. | £32,000,000 |
> | 1921–22 .. .. | £42,000,000 |
> | 1922–23 (estimate) .. .. .. | £40,000,000 |
>
> From September, 1920, to September, 1921, returns from 154 Unions show that £7,434,199 was paid out of Trade Union contributions in unemployment relief.
>
> During the last three years the total weekly reduction of wages imposed

on the workers amounts to £13,000,000 or a yearly reduction in the wages bill of £676,000,000.

Such was the condition of the working class while this 55th Annual Trade Union Congress was sitting, and yet with the best will in the world, the powers of the Congress are so restricted that it could do nothing effective to stem the onslaught of wage reduction, or to compel the provision of work or adequate maintenance for the one and a half million of unemployed.

On the Trade Union movement the effect of this want of competent power is disastrous. One million members have already left the Unions and another million are only kept in by more or less coercive measures and by "Back to the Unions campaigns." Unless something is done to unite the sectional unions under one directive body, more and more degradation, suffering and misery are awaiting the toiling millions of this country.

Why are the employing class able to impose their will on the employed? Because they are better organised. They are solidly federated—Mine Owners, Mill Owners, Ship Owners, Railway Companies, all federated together. They have no delicacy about using their enormous power. They lock out their workers if they do not submit to wage reductions. They close down collieries, close factories, and throw whole communities on the scrap heap to be fed by doles or parish relief. This Federation of Employers attacks the un-federated Unions of the workers in detail as witnessed by the onslaught on the miners, followed by the lock-out of the engineers, the pattern makers, the agricultural labourers and now the boiler-makers, and I have not seen yet that they have been dubbed as "Idiots" by their political chief for stopping the production of wealth "and reducing the too small incomes of the men." By the lock-out and the threat to lock out there have been over one thousand million pounds taken off the wages of the workers during the last three years by *Industrial Action*.

To counter this attack of the employers it is necessary to perfect our organisation. As the first step towards this end I wish to support the plan outlined and proposed by the General Council at the Trades Union Congress at Southport last year under the heading—"Standing Order No. 12—Duties of General Council."

These proposals, if adopted, would enable the Council to intervene in a dispute (*a*) by mediation, (*b*) in the event of negotiations breaking down, and involving a stoppage of work, the Council may offer advice and assistance and shall, if it deems it necessary, raise funds by a call on the affiliated unions to meet the expenditure of the Council in relation to the dispute. The important principle in the proposal is that it links up through the Council's intervention the whole Trade Union movement in support of the workers involved in the dispute,

and would effectively counter the tactics of the employers in picking out single industries for attack.

Of course it would be necessary to invest the Council with power to call a general cessation of work if necessary. It is no use shirking the issue—so long as the employers use the brutal power of the lock-out to reduce wages, the workers are compelled to use the power of the strike to defend themselves. The coal owners locked out over one million men in 1921. And the whole Trade Union movement has suffered terribly through allowing the miners to be defeated.

Let those who condemn strikes face these facts. The policy of non-resistance has brought the workers under the heel of Capitalism and is destroying the morale of our men.

At Southport the proposal of the Council met with many opponents and the previous question was carried. At Plymouth the proposal was again brought before Congress and was defeated on a card vote by 1,600,000. The main ground of objection came from the representatives of large organisations who said it would destroy the autonomy of the Unions; that it was an impracticable proposal inasmuch as the Council of Action would look at the dispute from the standpoint of those not immediately involved in the dispute, and would overlook the interests of those directly affected; that it would lead to protracted delay which would be all to the advantage of the employers.

These objections seem to me to be narrow and shallow—narrow because they glorify sectional unionism and disregard its impotence to deal with present-day problems; shallow because the objections strike at the collective principle upon which the Congress itself is based. We may pertinently ask—If the Trade Unions cannot act together and assist each other in a crisis, why a Trades Union Congress at all?

Unless Unions are prepared to act together Trades Unionism has decreed its own stultification and its own doom. To say that the worker must use his vote at the ballot box is very true; but that is no substitute for a powerful Trade Union. Over four million have voted labour, but their industrial conditions are still deplorable. A vote cast once every four years is no excuse for neglecting to perfect his industrial organisation. Sectional unionism is played out.

GEORGE BARKER, M.P.

IT is on record that the last occasion the Congress met at Plymouth the birth of the Labour Party took place. There is a vital need for a second birth. Never was bankruptcy in the conception of Labour's task, and the magnitude of the problems confronting the lives of the working class so clearly demonstrated.

Day by day, capitalism is seeking new avenues to express her mark upon institutions, but Labour refuses to contemplate her own needs.

Only on the occasion of the debate on the General Council's report of their year's work on working-class education, did the semblance of a conflict between the old and the new conception of the kind of education required take place. And even then, the upholders of co-partnership refused to state their case. An M.P. did suggest that we ought to cease wrangling about theories, and go out to capture the whole of the educational machine from A to Z. It was rather remarkable how many murmured assent to that theory, which presupposes Labour has gone over the threshold and is inside of the temple. Whereas the supporters of I.W.C.E. were suggesting that in order to get there, we need a policy of our own. Astonishment was expressed at the small sales of the *Daily Herald*, when compared with the membership of Congress. But if contact with the bosses' source of knowledge is right in one sphere, his press cannot be so very wicked in another sphere. We suggest that both are tainted and wrong.

As a basis of discussion in order that something concrete may be put forward, we suggest that there is no possibility of the Congress wielding the power and potential might that it ought, until the General Council, who are representative of every form and grade of industrial organisation and craft, have larger powers given to them. To-day they can only recommend or advise, however urgent the needs of the moment for action may be. J. Sexton, M.P., termed a proposal of this nature "a piece of Labour College impudence." We have heard it put forward as an argument against giving the General Council more power, that it would be of no use, because it would never be used. Our desire is that it shall have power to act, in every trade dispute, on every phase of the struggle between the opposing forces of Labour and capital, along lines that recognise the everyday facts of the struggle the workers are facing day by day. No calling of a levy, can possibly defeat the entrenched millions of the Federation of British Industries. The gradual death of the General Federation of Trade Unions is the most reliable evidence of that fact, therefore no general staff with a glimpse of the enemy's preserves would consider that Victorian theory many minutes.

In our opinion this is one of the fundamental moves that have to be made. Another will be the arrangement of the business of Congress. Something will have to be adopted along similar lines that are adopted by the British Association in the conduct of their business. Each organisation will select the members who are most suitable, *i.e.* have special knowledge of particular problems, that are to be discussed to state the views of their members, with a view

to arriving at a basis that will tend towards real unity of purpose and success in action.

There are other phases in the remoulding of the structure, that will crop up. There is the question of the organisations affiliated and their members having the opportunity to decide the policy. It is questionable if any trade union branch to-day even hears of the Congress, until it is over, let alone discuss the agenda. All of these suggestions may or may not be desirable, time alone will prove. But whatever the change that is going to take place, and be assured a change must take place, will only be brought about by an effort *inside* the affiliated organisations. Outsiders may draw up elaborate structures of what-ought-to-be, which count for very little, unless the work is going ahead *inside*.

Nowhere is the necessity for this more urgent, than inside the Miners' Federation. Numerically the largest, and yet they had not one resolution on Congress agenda. Perhaps there were no problems affecting the miners !

We venture the opinion that had the M.F.G.B. had a resolution on the agenda to give the General Council powers such as foreshadowed above, it would have been an accomplished fact by now. Such is the power of numbers inside of modern Labour assemblies. A move, therefore, ought to be made to get a similar resolution, before the next Annual Conference of the M.F.G.B., as the A.U.B.T.W. put forward at Plymouth. Plebeians who are members of other organisations could do likewise.

In the last quarter of a century, there has been a recognition of the necessity for action along lines political. The late Keir Hardie fought many many battles on the floor of Congress before it was accomplished. At that period there were trade union leaders who stood on the employers' political platforms. Methods of organisation industrially are where they were 25 years ago. All the development that has taken place in the intervening years has neither altered the pace nor the form. The idealogy of the sick-benefit society lingers on. The moving finger writes, but 'tis not seen.

An old delegate sitting near me, remarked that many of the resolutions he could remember having heard moved thirty years ago. And if there is no change, others in 1953 will make similar observations.

Let no one minimise the seriousness of the situation that "Labour's Industrial Parliament," to use a hackneyed phrase, is in to-day. Years roll on, the might of Labour's oppressors gets mightier still, standards of life rise very, very slowly in proportion to the advance of the enemy. We seek to achieve unity of purpose and action by passing resolutions on the same, and then —well, forget it. We demand the world for the workers, and cannot organise one day's stop in 365, even to pass that May-Day resolution.

We have not mentioned any of the laundry work that is usually done at Congresses, realising that the last washing ought to have brought home the realisation of its uselessness. That too will only end, in so far as the changes indicated take place. Criticism of anything is of no avail, unless we indicate where future criticism can be avoided, that is why we feel the need for discussion of the cardinal points that will make for real unity.

Changes are inevitable, and are bound to come; will they come from the top or the bottom? We care not how quickly they come, nor from whence they come, but we do suggest that a better change will come, if a thorough discussion of the defects of the structure takes place, and the hammering-out of the new forms of the building. In no section of the movement has a more thorough and detailed study been made, than amongst our students of the history of the trade-union movement. This is the moment to put theory into practice, to apply the remedy now that the problem demands solution.

WILL LAWTHER.

THE CAT IN THE TRIPE HOUSE

The Builders' History. By R. W. Postgate. (Labour Publishing Company, 12s. 6d.; Special Edition to members of the N.F.B.T.O. or Plebs League, 6s. 3d.; postpaid orders for this to PLEBS office.)

SOLOMON was not only an ass—witness his three hundred concubines as well as seven hundred posh and proper wives—but a liar. A patent and manifest liar. Any one of his 700 taken at random must have taught him things to such an extent as to make it pure bluff to say "there is nothing new under the sun." True he camouflages his impudence with a slab of obvious truth. "Much study" *is* a "weariness of the flesh"—[especially with a thousand at home all arguing about the pictures or the latest thing in fig-leaves]—and "to the making of new books" there is, as he says "no end." But he lies when he says there is nothing new. Some of the books are new—in form and in substance; and Postgate's latest is one of them.

Fresh from reading the reports of the Trade Union Congress, one might be forgiven for the supposition that any history of any trade union must be a weirdly dreary tangle of stupidity, self-stultifying cupidity and wrong-headed rectitude; a tale told in

a fog with tables of statistics to relieve the gloom. As for the idea that builders (plumbers, carpenters, bricklayers and the like) have a history fit for anything but suppression by the public censor of morals.....: Only Postgate could conceive such a notion.

"Besides," the wise young men will say "the Webbs have done it all."

The notion is natural and therefore fantastically wide of the mark. The Webbs did a great work when they turned out their *History of Trade Unionism*. They discovered what must have been for many in their time a brand new world. But they did and would claim to have done no more than mark out the main outlines. The detail explanation they left to others, and it is to Postgate's credit that he has done his work so well that not only will the result be a standard work for students of trade-unionism and the phenomenology of the working-class struggle but, I venture to predict, many others will be tempted to follow his example—in most cases, alas! without his qualifications.

There are many "histories" of separate Trade Unions. Generally it happens that when a union arrives at a consciousness of great age some old veteran sets about writing its "history." Which means in practice that he forages among the old reports and the relics of his memory to produce a thesis demonstrating (*a*) that "lads were men in *them* days" and (*b*) that the Union has justified itself in the eyes of God, men and the universe, by producing him and the prevailing policy—that henceforth the integrating processes of cosmic evolution can "switch-off" since any further development will be away from perfection.

The Builders—always a contrary set of men—have done far otherwise. Not the least virtue of Postgate's book is the fact that it ends on a note of Reveille and cuts out the Hallelujah Chorus altogether. The study classes under the N.C.L.C. scheme who will use this book as a textbook will have their best wine at the last when they reach the stage of drawing the moral (which Postgate quite properly leaves to their good sense and educated imagination).

But the book is not only for Builders. It is quite possible that Builders will be too preoccupied with certain aspects of their craft or too conscious of special problems in organisation to appreciate the value of the work as a whole. Those who make it their business to understand the workers' class struggle as a concrete fact—those who are beginning to rediscover the "Marxism of Marx" will find the book indispensable. Its smaller relative scope gives room for greater detail than does the general history of the Webbs, and Postgate's better historical sense and greater sympathy with human frailty make it a fascinating salutary survey.

Strange, is it not? We who had perfected our theory of General

Ultimates to such an extent that we could, would, and (more shame for us !) did sweep in one lecture from "Nebula to World Revolution," were so pre-occupied with the General Law of Capitalist Development and the General Aspect of the Class Struggle that we were often unable to recognise either in their detail manifestations. We were so cock-sure about the economic "roots" of this, that and the other, that it comes as a breath-bereaving surprise when (our pupils, look you !) the young men setting out to prove our doctrine make discoveries under our noses. J. F. H. has astonished us by re-discovering the earth, and Postgate has gone further and re-discovered the human beings. In time (aided by the pair of them) the trades-unions will re-discover Trade Unionism and then the revolution will be due.

I do not mean that Postgate has unearthed in the *Builders' History* any great man who changed the fortunes of the craft or the class. The only man of significance outside of the industry with whom he has to deal is Applegarth (of the "Junta") and he, though important enough, is little of a "great man." It is in his keen appreciation of the little things that count that Postgate shines, and the general perspective is made all the more true and vivid by his care in handling these essential details. "Back to the Masses" has a fresh significance after reading Postgate's *History*.

Take for example the cinematographic succession of metamorphoses concealed beneath the generic name "Builder." Ignoring the Primordial Cave-Hewer (who lands us into a demarcation dispute between miner and quarryman) evading the wattle-plaiter, and the stockade erecter, we might take our start with the mud-bricklayer, the stone-mason, and the carpenter—these three. Were they originally one ? Who knows ? Abandoning them we meet the plasterers and painters of the Pyramids. Evading them (as Postgate does in his first paragraph) and dodging alike the guilds and the tempting side-alley of Free-Masonry we reach the eve of the industrial revolution. Once you are reminded of it, it becomes obvious that that enormous transformation involved much more than spinning-jennys, mules, power-looms, and steam-engines. It involved in its demand for new factories, and the housing in new industrial towns alike of the new proletariat and the new-bourgeoisie —their "boozers" and their Bethels—a new demand for builders and a new technique of building. Evidences of the transition are yet to be found. Put a master-builder who has spent his life in the construction of cow-sheds and barns to the job of housing those working in a newly-sunk coal-pit and you will get the "miners' row" as it may yet be seen in Lancashire, Durham, Northumberland and Lanarkshire. Give a speculating bricklayer the problem of getting the maximum of accommodation out of a given minimum

of acreage and the result will be the back-to-back of the West Riding. And as the demand grows it has its reactions upon brickmakers, bricklayers, wood-sawyers, joiners, slaters, tilers, plasterers, painters, and plumbers. These come last because only the problems created by aggregation into towns created the need for water-supply, drainage, and sanitation. To trace the reactions of machinery, new processes and new inventions upon the various crafts, and the effect of these upon the status of the worker and his mentality up to these days of ferro-concrete, wood-working machinery, fibro-plaster slabs, mechanical mortar mixers, steam navvies, and the complications of gas-fitting, central heating, and electric light, is only in part Postgate's theme. Enough, however, is indicated by him to send every genuine student searching for similar reactions everywhere. And everywhere the result will be to see the pride of craft constantly growing before its fall into the abyss of "general labouring."

There is so much in this book that one is bewildered by the number of lines of speculation it opens up. One's emotions, in fact, are those of the Manchester Stonemasons (in 1850)—"We resemble a cat in a tripe-house, surrounded by an abundance of delicate food; still, because it is so plentiful, so equally good and so alike tempting .....unable to decide where to commence or what to consume."

On the whole, the most refreshing feature of the book is the vivid characterisation of the personalities entering into the narrative. Richard Harnott, the Stonemason; Applegarth, the Carpenter; and Coulson, the Bricklayer; are all worth knowing—all the more because their policies, wrecked by the lapse of the conditions which gave them birth, remain dead traditions lumbering our path. Those who built up the social-pacifist philosophy of the Unions in the period 1860–89, were neither cowards, knaves, nor weaklings. And if their philosophy has been purloined and re-published in the Universities for W.E.A. consumption, it is not a measure of their failure so much as of their success. That the Employers' should want to co-operate with the Trade Unions in securing "industrial peace" and should build a philosophy of class-co-operation after all these years—after exploring every possibility of destroying them—proves the soundness of the judgment of the Old Guard relative to their time and occasion. Folly begins when men who are neither Applegarths nor faced with Applegarth's problems seek to evade their responsibilities by making Applegarthism into an Eternal Gospel.

The book has several gems of purest Postgate sheen. Speaking of the failure of an attempt to organise the Painters (*circa* 1870) he quotes George Shipton as blaming certain financial provisions which permitted those who joined in the first three months to qualify for benefits in six months instead of twelve. The result, says Postgate, was "an inrush of thrifty old gentlemen at the beginning

who almoſt at once went on one or other of the benefits and after draining the funds dry left the Society." And in describing one of the many abortive attempts at amalgamation, he speaks of the "toothless enthusiasm" of the lodge that was "not ashamed of being seventy-seven years old."

Very ſtriking too, in a different way is the appreciation of Tressall's *Ragged Trousered Philanthropiſts.*

Plebs should certainly do their utmoſt to secure a wide appreciation of this Hiſtory as a means to getting more like it.

T. A. JACKSON.

USE YOUR HEAD !

In his article in the September PLEBS, *J. P. M. Millar emphasised the need for and usefulness of good propaganda leaflets. Here is one written by E. H. H. Holman, secretary of the Workers' College, Minneapolis, U.S.A., which we take from the pages of "The Labor Age" (New York). We have no doubt the author will be only too pleased if it is re-printed by British Labour Colleges.*

USE YOUR HEAD

AN animal will watch a fire burn out and freeze beside it. It never thinks of putting on fresh fuel.

A man will keep the fire burning and save himself from the cold. Therefore, men dwell in homes while animals ſtill live in caves.

The earth has always been the same. Its resources have always been ready for man to use. Coal, iron, lumber, heat, electricity have exiſted ever since man set foot upon the earth.

For a long time our early anceſtors lived like animals in foreſts and caves. Man was afraid of nature. He thought the earth was full of evil spirits. He feared everything he couldn't underſtand. He was too ignorant to learn about these forces of nature.

Man has passed through that ſtage, partially at leaſt. He has *used his head* so that he underſtands how to burn coal, build houses, send ſteamboats around the world, catch radio messages out of the air.

All the wonderful machinery, the railroads, the factories, the sky-scrapers, that compose our induſtrial syſtem are the evidences of men who used their heads.

When people begin to think about things, they also progress.

WAR

We ſtill have war. Why ?

The workers do the fighting. They pay the bills. They make ıe sacrifices. They vote for men who "keep us out of peace." he workers are responsible. Think it over. *Use your head.* ıſt as soon as the workers begin to think for themselves about ar, some way will be found to abolish wars.

UNEMPLOYMENT

We produce about twenty-five times the wealth per day's work ur grandfathers did. Yet over a million workers are idle in normal" times and six or eight million in panicky times.

Why? *Use your head.* It's the only way to find a solution f the problem and an equal opportunity to work.

POVERTY

In the richeſt land on the earth we always have poverty. Why? *Jse your head.*

There is no reason except the ignorance of the workers that ıermits poverty to exiſt. So in regard to all our social problems. Dnly in so far as the workers learn to solve their own problems vill this world become a fit and decent place in which to live.

CLASS WAR WEARINESS

ROSA LUXEMBURG'S *Letters from Prison** come at an opportune time. Over the whole workers' movement hangs a cloud of "class war weariness." The spring has gone out of us; we have loſt the zeſt that sent us into the fight. We waver between extravagant expectation—which quickly dies down to disguſt—and a sort of nervous irritation that keeps us working, but in a bored way. We doggedly keep ſtep, but we put no "guts" into it.

There are many reasons for this weariness; too many to discuss here. There are many cures. One cure is to try to regain some of the firſt vivid feelings that made us join the movement, and these Letters will certainly help us to do this. They are not great literature, and like all rather personal emotional things they will reaſt on different people in different ways. But they bring before one so clearly and vividly the personality of one of the saints in our Socialiſt Calendar, that one feels again that quickening sense of revolt againſt injuſtice which one felt in earlier days.

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* *Letters from Prison.* By Rosa Luxemburg. Trans. by Eden & Cedar Paul. (Young Communist League, 36, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. 1. Post-paid, 1s. 2d.).

The strange thing is that there is here no tirade against the wickedness of Capitalism, no "back slanging," no clarion calls to comrades to "Arise"; only a few very personal letters written from her own prison to Karl Liebknecht's wife, to comfort her when her husband was in prison. But these few letters express the calmness and steadfastness of Rosa Luxemburg's own spirit so well that they are an inspiration. Their very simplicity, their concern with everyday ordinary things, such as the lives of birds, the sufferings of dumb animals, the desire to save loved ones from pain, the comfort of friendship, bring her before us as a living woman. Here is no mere demagogue, but one to whom hatred of oppression and cruelty has been a dynamic, forcing her to action. Inaction—calm—were difficult things for her, as the following quotation shows :—

> "I felt my position keenly for a moment to-day. The whistle of the engine at 3.19 told me that Mathilde was leaving. Like a beast in a cage I positively ran to and fro along the wall where I usually 'go for a walk.' My heart throbbed with pain as I said to myself, 'If only I too could get away from here, if only I too could get away!' Oh, well, this heart of mine has become like a well trained dog. I gave it a slap and told it to lie down. Enough of me and my troubles."

It was the fact that she was disciplined not by any outside organisation but by the strength of her own character that made her dangerous. How big her sympathies were and how all her inclination was towards beauty and freedom may be judged from this following passage. She has been describing the cruel beating of two buffaloes sent to the prison with loads of blood-stained soldiers' tunics, how they were belaboured until one was bleeding and she says :—

> "While the lorry was being unloaded the beasts, which were utterly exhausted, stood perfectly still. The one that was bleeding had an expression on its black face and in its soft black eyes like that of a weeping child—one that has been severely thrashed and does not know why or how to escape from the torment of ill treatment. I stood in front of the team: the beast looked at me; the tears welled from my own eyes. The suffering of a dearly loved brother could hardly have moved me more profoundly than I was moved by my impotence in face of this mute agony. Far distant, lost for ever, were the green, lush meadows of Rumania. How different there the light of the sun, the breath of the wind; how different there the song of the birds, and the melodious call of the herdsmen. Instead, the hideous street, the fœtid stable, the rank hay mingled with mouldy straw, the strange and terrible men—blow upon blow and blood running from gaping wounds. Poor wretch, I am as powerless, as dumb as yourself; I am at one with you in my pain, my weakness and my longing. Meanwhile the women prisoners . . . unload the dray. The driver, hands in pockets, whistles a popular air. I had a vision of all the splendour of war!"

But it is not often that she recounts anything sad; most of the Letters are happy in spirit, full of interest in the restricted life around her in prison and the memory of all the beauties she had enjoyed before she was put there. Bird life seemed to interest her very deeply. In one letter she is lamenting the fact that crested larks are timid.

"If I throw out crumbs they only fly away, being very different from the pigeons and sparrows which follow me about like little dogs. It is no use for me to tell myself not to be silly, seeing that I am not responsible for all the hungry little larks in the world, and that I cannot shed tears over all the thrashed buffaloes in the world (they still come here day after day drawing the lorries laden with bags). Logic does not help in the matter. . . . In the same way, though the chattering of the starling during the livelong day is tiresome, at times if the bird is silent for a day or two, I get no rest from the feeling that something must have happened to it. I wait and wait for the nonsense talk to be resumed so that I can be reassured as to my starling's safety. Thus passing out of my cell in all directions are fine threads connecting me with thousands of creatures great and small. . . . "

In another she says :—

"Sometimes it seems to me that I am not really a human being at all but like a bird or beast in human form. I feel so much more at home even in a scrap of garden like the one here, and still more in the meadows when the grass is humming with bees than—at one of our party congresses. I can say this to you, for you will not promptly suspect me of treason to Socialism! You know that I really hope to die at my post, in a street fight or in prison."

We need nothing to remind us of how she did die. We can never forget. Remembering that horror it is good to recall her gentleness and the beauty of her spirit and to realise all over again that as well as being historically "correct" and other dull things of that sort, we have on our side all that is best in human aspiration and longing, and many of the best human beings too.

The Bible says that after God had created the world He looked at it and found that it was good. That is what we have done—or ought to have done. We fight against all the forces that keep the working millions from seeing that vision. Liebknecht, Luxemburg and the un-named comrades who have shared their fate were our fellows—human beings. It is easy to lose sight of that ; and when we feel class war weariness it is heartening to turn from theory and thesis, from organisation and routine, to discover once again the human feelings of our fellow workers and see again the vision without which we perish. It is because the system stunts and starves and finally stamps out such as Rosa Luxemburg that we must "keep step."

WINIFRED HORRABIN.

GERMANY during the NINETEENTH CENTURY

This short series of articles on Germany, setting forth her economic development in the XIXth century and its main social and political reactions will, it is hoped, assist students to understand more clearly the forces that gave her the power she exercised during the decades preceding 1914, *and the underlying causes of Franco-German antagonism which has played so great a part in determining the course of events since the War. The present article deals with the economic-political forces behind German nationalism, the triumph of which placed a large, unified capitalist State under the direction of the most class-conscious and deliberate statecraft of the world before* 1914.

II.—THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY 1848-71.

Results of 1848

THE essence of the earlier period, 1815–48, had been the marshalling of the forces against absolutism. The higher strata of the middle classes had assumed the lead, and they gathered the fruits of victory. The first use of their new power was to turn back the tide of the lower and more militant classes behind them, and for this purpose they entered into a compromise with the defeated aristocracy. The latter retained office but the former enjoyed ultimate control through the Budget.

Thus the class struggle assumed a new phase. Against the alliance of aristocracy and bourgeoisie was a democratic-nationalist group consisting of (*a*) part of the upper bourgeoisie still bent on abolishing all relics of absolutism, (*b*) members of the middle class who aimed at a democratic confederation of the German States, and (*c*) Middle-class Republicans—the "radicals." A Labour and Communist movement had recently appeared, but the masses generally were still under the influence of the middle class. The chief bond between this very mixed Opposition was the demand for the Unification of Germany.

Motives of the Demand for Union

This demand had already found expression in the offer of the crown to the King of Prussia by the National Assembly, March 25, 1849. The downfall of the Assembly and the subsequent compromise left intact the tendencies forcing the issue, among which the progress of the Zollverein was the most dynamic ; and it was already a decade since Dr. Bowring had reported to the British Government : "The Zollverein has brought the sentiment of German nationality out

of the region of hope and fancy into those of positive material interests." A year later, 1841, List had published his famous *System of National Economy*. Its immediate success was due to the fact that it was simply a scientific expression of views then widely held in certain influential quarters of the industrial magnates of the Customs Union, while it also made a powerful appeal to the nationalists. It was an eloquent plea for Protection as a means of encouraging German industry, and was followed by the first real struggle between the Free Trade and Protectionist interests.

Conflict over Tariff Policy

The stronghold of "Protectionism" was the iron and cotton-spinning industries which could not face British competition. Thus the proportion of iron consumed which was produced in Germany itself fell from 78 per cent. in 1839 to 45 per cent. in 1843. The cotton spinning industry, too, was still unstable : the yarn imported was double the home product. On the other hand the consumers of iron and the weavers were decidedly averse to Protection and were supported by the agriculturists and traders.

This conflict was important politically. It meant opposition between Prussia and the southern States ; for in spite of the Rhenish ironmasters, Prussian policy was swayed by her agriculturists, who exported large quantities of grain and timber. The Baltic ports, too, opposed a policy which menaced their foreign commerce. But the southern States favoured Protection, chiefly in consequence of the interests of the cotton spinners, though Bavaria was divided on the issue, the spinners advocating, the weavers opposing, Protection. The result of the conflict was a general increase of duties, Prussia showing herself prepared to give way in the hope of consolidating her position in the Zollverein, whose advantages to herself, economic and political, she clearly recognised.

Prussia v. Austria

These advantages began to strike Austria also, and she determined to force an entrance into the Union—or to destroy it, and so to strike a heavy blow at her rival, Prussia. The tariff conflict within the Union provided an opportunity. The smaller States regarded Austrian policy favourably, believing her entrance would counterbalance the power of Prussia. And Austria formulated an ambitious programme for the complete economic union of the whole of Germany and Austria. Prussia strove to strengthen herself against these designs. While she opened negotiations with Austria for the entrance of the latter into the Zollverein, she prepared plans for breaking it up and forming a new one with the northern States alone. However, after long negotiations, a compromise was effected in April 1853, postponing the entrance of Austria, but arranging for a special Commission

to formulate plans for her full admission in 1860. Both sides regarded this as a victory, and a trading agreement established mutual favoured-nation treatment.

Economic Expansion

But the agreement did more than call a halt to the old political struggle ; at long last it gave the economic forces of capitalism a free field for expansion. Since the beginning of the century a series of conditions had retarded this development. The consolidation of the Zollverein under Prussia and her truce with Austria liberated the economic forces ; and the period 1853–70 was of fundamental importance, both in itself and for subsequent expansion.

During the whole of this middle period, agriculture remained the chief industry. From 1852 until 1864, the area included in the Zollverein was stationary, but its population increased from 30 to 35 millions. In 1852, the agricultural population comprised nearly 70 per cent. of the whole. In 1871 only one-third of the new Empire's 41 millions lived in towns of more than 2,000 population—only a fourth in towns of more than 5,000. But industry made steady progress. The output of iron increased from 400,000 tons in 1850 to over three times the quantity in 1870. Railways—the later extension of which throughout Central and Eastern Europe was to prove so creative a force in the making of modern Germany—were rapidly laid down so that in 1869 there were 3,500 miles of rail. As in England, the textile industry played a conspicuous part in the Industrial Revolution. In 1851, the amount of raw cotton consumed was over half a million cwts. By 1861 it had risen to nearly a million cwts., and in 1870 was well over the million mark. Meanwhile the number of spindles increased during the years 1852–67 by 122 per cent. and the amount of cotton worked up with each spindle from 50 lbs. to 70 lbs. In 1850 the home supply of yarn was less than the amount imported—440,000 cwts. against 497,000 cwts.; before 1860 the home supply exceeded the foreign, and in 1871 the home yarn amounted to nearly 2,000,000 cwts. while the foreign yarn was only 400,000 cwts.

German Nationalism

These developments were the result chiefly of the consolidation of the Zollverein. But the latter had its serious limitations. It did not yet include the whole of the States and it was restricted to mutual tariff arrangements ; and the Austro-Prussian problem had only been shelved. The task before German capitalism was the removal of these limitations—and it became an ever more urgent one, for every advance of the bourgeoisie in wealth and influence provided at once an added power and an added incentive to its accomplishment. The "German Question" assumed a new vitality and was enthusiastically

supported. The increased interest in politics was not confined to the middle classes. The workers also were evincing a new interest, and arousing the fears of the middle class.

> Whatever the internal condition of Prussia, the Liberals regarded that as the only State which could bring about the unification of Germany and protect them against the domination of the masses. Bismarck knew his Liberals when he said of them : " More than they hate me, they dread a revolution " (Bebel, *My Life*, p. 47–48).

But the lack of organisation, the acrimonious quarrels between such parties as did exist and the general political immaturity of the masses, placed them at the mercy of the Liberals. And in any case, both the Lassalleans and the disciples of Bebel accepted the unification of the middle classes who looked to Prussia as the one State capable of achieving that purpose. And in Prussia, significantly enough, appeared the two men whose names are one with the achievement of German unity.

William I. and Bismarck

If this unity were to be realised under the leadership of Prussia, it involved the expulsion of Austria from the Confederation ; and this meant war. Hence the first step was the reorganisation of the Prussian army. This the growing wealth of the State made possible, and William's plans were to double the standing army from 200,000 to 400,000 men, to prolong the period of training from three to four years, and to introduce the latest methods of training and equipment. But though Prussia possessed the necessary material resources for this new departure in military organisation, the Parliament had little sympathy with these expensive schemes. By its refusal to vote the necessary supplies, William was compelled to choose between absolute and limited monarchy. He himself hesitated to face the issue, but he was advised to make Bismarck his chief minister for the carrying through of his project. Bismarck was in every way admirably fitted for the task—by his personal qualities, his social status and training, and by his wide political experience. Yet Bismarck himself regretted the necessity of defying Parliament ; but supported by the Upper House he proceeded with the military reforms. He " knew his Liberals "—he knew that when the reorganised army had made Prussia a power capable of realising its own aspirations and solving the German problem in accordance with middle-class views, they would be won over to an administration which was as enthusiastic as they themselves in defence of property, law and order.

It was ostensibly over the fate of the two provinces, Schleswig-Holstein, that the war between Prussia and Austria broke out in 1866 ; but the real issue was the final decision of the long struggle between them for the overlordship of Germany. After a brief but decisive war lasting only seven weeks, the Peace of Prague secured the final

expulsion of Austria from the Confederation ; otherwise the terms imposed by Prussia were of marked moderation.

Formation of the Socialist Party

The changed economic situation—the Industrial Revolution in Germany, which conditions had postponed until the middle of the century—had its usual reactions upon class relations. The workers' organisations felt increasingly the need for a changed policy. The leftward tendency of the time is interestingly illustrated in the very representative personality of Bebel. In 1865, a year fruitful in strikes and lock-outs, he was asked to mediate between Leipzig printers and their employers. It was an illuminating experience.

> The very men who had fawned on the people and protested their friendship for the workers had offered the most decided resistance to the demands of the workers. It was not, therefore, to be wondered at that even those workers who were most hostile to Lassalleanism [*i.e.* to a working-class theory and practice of the class struggle] should condemn those Liberals in the most unflattering terms (Bebel, *My Life*, p. 67).

The establishment of the North German Confederation and the calling of a North German Diet to be elected by popular suffrage, after the expulsion of Austria, demanded action on the part of the organised workers. A programme was drawn up at Chemnitz. The Lassalleans attended the Conference but refused to join the party set up, since it was in no way socialist or communist but purely radical. The party thus formed was successful in gaining two seats in the Diet, and at a subsequent election later in the year two other members were elected.

But the harsh experience of the class struggle compelled a more militant and definitely proletarian policy. And this found expression at the Congress of Nuremburg, 1868. As opposed to the former programme which "deplored the antagonism between capital and labour," this was avowedly based on the principles of the recently-formed International. A large minority broke away, but quickly degenerated into a mere appendage of the Liberals. Thus the Saxon People's Party and the Union of Workingmen's Associations adopted a definitely Socialist attitude. The same year 1868 saw another notable development—the birth of a policy for German Trade Unionism, another direct result of the intensified class struggle of those years. But the early Union was set up by rival political bodies which regarded them merely as means to their own advancement.

Completion of German Unity

Meanwhile Bismarck's plans proceeded apace. A big step towards unification was taken towards the goal of unification in July, 1867, when a treaty was made between the Confederation and the southern

States. By this, a Diet was established for the decision of matters relating to the Customs duties and to the indirect taxation common to North and South ; and modifications making for greater efficiency were introduced into the Zollverein regulations. During 1868 and 1869 a whole series of treaties was made between the Zollverein and foreign countries, all tending towards Free Trade.

But Bismarck's triumphs, military and political, were making of Prussia a formidable competitor against France for first place in Europe. Napoleon III now demanded compensation for France's friendly neutrality in 1866—practically the whole of the German lands west of the Rhine and, some assert, Belgium as well. Bismarck published the demands broadcast. Napoleon had played into his hands, and for the first time the southern States were prepared to accept Bismarck's leadership. Thus, when Napoleon declared war, he found one of his chief hopes—the hope of division between north and south Germany—a broken reed. He deceived himself equally in estimating the efficiency of the French armies. The overpowering superiority of Prussia's organisation and equipment quickly decided the issue. The part played by railways in the campaign—so disorganised on the one side, so efficient on the other—came at once as a revelation and a practical demonstration of the new strategy. In this instance it meant that Prussia, not France, assumed the offensive.

Prussia dictated the terms of peace. France was cut off from the Rhine; Metz and Strasburg, together with Alsace and half Lorraine were ceded, and a large indemnity was imposed on her.

The victory of a Germany united in arms was the final link in the chain of German unity politically, though Bavaria hesitated long before she joined in. inviting William to become the "German Emperor." The princes were to retain their titles and some of their rights, but for all practical purposes the new Empire was to be "under a single government, with one army, one law and one master."

T. ASHCROFT

(To be continued.)

A WORKER looks at IRISH HISTORY

A series of articles, the first of which appeared in the October PLEBS (7d. post free).

II.—THE ANGLO-NORMAN AND LATER INVASIONS

Their Incidence

IN the effort to overcome the Danes the rival kingdoms of Ulster, Connaught, Meath, Leinster and Munster, had united in 1002 A.D. under the famous *overking*, Brian Boru. But this unity did not last long enough to repel the Anglo-Normans. In fact division among the rival chieftains led one of them to invite the help of Henry II., who sent Strongbow. The invaders, however, had no easy task, and although they conquered the central lowland even to beyond the Shannon and pushed southwards, they could never complete their conquests. The south-eastern highlands and the mountainous regions of the south-west, east and north of Ireland, were effective barriers. "Beyond the 'Pale' (that varying district in which the English were paramount) lay forest and bog—natural defences, which the Irish strengthened by twining together branches and bushes in the woods, and by deepening the river-fords so as to render them impassable." A good parallel has been made between the English in the Pale and the present European settlements on the coast of China; the country was not subjugated but "leaping-off places" had been established.

The English introduced the feudal system and divided the country up into counties. In many cases the newly created English lords, as successful warrior invaders, owned only a formal allegiance to the English king, and by intermarriage amongst themselves and surviving Irish chieftains "became more Irish than the Irish themselves."

The Irish Serf

The effect of the first Anglo-Norman invasion was to degrade the member of the Irish tribe to the position of a serf (Hibernicus). Strongbow's captains became lords over wide domains, and their followers became the free tenants. The serf had lost his old right of electing his chief, and was inferior in his social status. The word of his lord as given in the court leet was his law. He was bound to

the soil and had to pay a rent of service in "week work" and "boon work"; sometimes there were money rents also.

In England there was a union later between the conquerors and the conquered. Trade and money rents there undermined feudalism and serfdom. In Ireland the old clan survived and there was no union between the cultivators and their alien dominators. The division between them was a running sore deepened, not healed, by time. However, in the thirteenth century it looked as if such a union were possible. The gilds were winning "liberties" and gaining control in the towns of Wexford, Trim, Carlow, Kilkenny, Drogheda and other places. In A.D. 1300, representations of the counties, cities and boroughs were called into the Feudal Assembly, which preceded the first Irish Parliament. But the set-back to English influence by the invasion from Scotland, mentioned below, produced a long and devastating warfare, and ended the possibility of a peaceful development of trade and the gilds. Instead of blending Ireland with England, the Plantagenets sought kingdoms in France and treated Ireland as a foreign country.

Tudor Attempts

In 1315–18 the English were penned back into the towns because an attack by Edward Bruce had weakened their power considerably. The Tudors subsequently made serious attempts to exert their authority over the whole of Ireland. Henry VIII. tried a policy of conciliation, and sought to convert the Irish chiefs into feudal barons holding their land from the English crown. For the most part they refused and the Irish people were offended by the attempted dissolution of the monasteries. Where the chiefs would not submit or rebelled, their lands were later annexed and plantations made; *i.e.*, Scotch and English settlers worked the lands which were often owned by absent persons high in the royal favour.

The largest attempts at plantation were those of Elizabeth, in Munster (1586), out of the lands of the defeated Desmond, and those of James I. in Ulster (1609). Thus the British gained the influence they wanted. By the time the Elizabethan and Jacobean plantations had been carried through, only the Middle West (Clare and Galway) and the ever rebellious mountainous region of Wicklow remained unsubdued.

The first four centuries of invasion produced a bitter never-ending opposition. The feudal barons set up by the English were as strong and as independent as the French, and the continuance of their rebellious behaviour prevented any complete or permanent conquest. The English king could not ally himself with the Irish traders because of the jealousy of the English traders. Because the Irish chiefs and tribesmen would not submit, they were evicted

and their home lands given to settlers alien in race and religion, or they were forced to pay exorbitant rents for their own holdings, if—as was the case in some areas—no Protestant tenants could be found.

Social Conditions

From Elizabethan records the following picture of Ireland at the end of the sixteenth century has been obtained. Cattle raising was the chief occupation. The troubled times did not permit of much corn growing ; the cattle were light and active so they could be driven, in emergencies, for long distances into safety. At night they were sheltered in enclosures called " bawns." Oats was the chief crop. " The Irish ate one meal in the day composed of oat-cake made savoury with butter or some other milk product." They drank sour milk and a preparation from sour curds called " bonny-clabber " ; and whiskey was coming into use. Meat was a luxury reserved for feasts. The potato was introduced in 1585, and in the next century became " the poor man's subsistence crop " on account of its quick and large returns, inexpensive cultivation and easy storage.

The Irish houses were still built of wattle and clay and roofed with thatch. Even later, Petty described the dwellings of three-quarters of the native peasantry as miserable mud-walled cabins, without stairs, door, window or chimney—which dwellings could be built in three or four days.

Summary

Invasions brought to the Irish workers a complete loss of their old rights, and made conditions worse. The fighting chiefs with their bards, and the monks in their writings, have only scorn for the *bodach*—the tiller of the soil—who alone made their existence possible.

Irish trade and latent industry were sacrificed to English interests. Plantations of aliens made permanent the confiscation of Irish lands, and the rights of the sept or clan to the land were totally disregarded by the application of the English property law under which, in the few cases of acceptance, the old chief became the sole proprietor. " Communal ownership of land would, undoubtedly, have given way to the privately owned system of capitalist-landlordism even if Ireland had remained an independent country, but coming as it did in obedience to the pressure of armed force from without, instead of by the operation of economic forces from within, the change has been bitterly and justly resented by the vast mass of the Irish people, many of whom mix with their dreams of liberty, longings for a return to the ancient system of land tenure—now organically impossible " (*Labour in Irish History*, p. 4).

MARK STARR.

BOOKS REVIEWED by PLEBS reviewers

THE HEBREWS

The Old Testament in the Twentieth Century. By J. Lewis, B.Sc. (Allen & Unwin, cloth 6s., paper 3s.).

TO the student of races, religions and, it may be added, of revolutions, a knowledge of the main facts of Hebrew history is of considerable value. Several of the more important points of the theory of Historical Materialism are clearly illustrated by events and phases of this section of world history. The transition from the nomadic desert life to that of the semi-nomadic breeders of small cattle who have attained to a partially sedentary form of existence, may now be traced in the accounts given in the earlier parts of the story of the Hebrews as related by Biblical critics and archæologists. The geographical position of Palestine is a factor of some importance. Situated between Phœnicia and Syria to the north and Egypt to the south, with the great Assyrian empire rising in the east as an increasing menace to their safety, their relations with these more powerful neighbours reacted with marked effect upon their national life. The geographical factor plays a further part as one of the primary causes of the disruption of the kingdom into two parts. Judah, in the south, is more hilly and was consequently more difficult to subdue. Moreover the hill citadel of Jerusalem formed a natural centre for the religious and political organisation of the national life. In the north, (which was less hilly and easier of access) the Israelites entered into alliances with the Syrians against the common Assyrian enemy, and had important relations with the Phœnicians, who were the great trading people of the time. The effect of the change from a nomadic to a settled state of existence upon the religious and political ideas of the Hebrews is repeatedly exemplified, as are the results of slavery, war, exile and class rule. Much too, may be learnt by contrasting the barbaric Asiatic imperialism of antiquity, based on tribute and slave labour, with modern imperialism based on wage-labour. It should be observed that the primary cause of the wide difference between the two forms, ancient and modern, is the development of the material productive forces especially those associated with transport and intercommunication. The present work contains considerable information relating to the salient and essential facts of Hebrew history concisely summarised into the small space of less than 150 pages. It is written in a popular style and in quite simple language by one who has a sound knowledge of his subject and who is evidently a teacher of considerable experience. The book also contains valuable and suggestive lessons on class-work and teaching which might be applied with advantage to the teaching of other subjects beside that of the Old Testament.

The book is, however, written from a quite definite standpoint—that of the author's religious philosophy; and the foundations of his thesis will certainly be seriously questioned by some of his readers. Whilst frankly accepting many of the conclusions of modern O.T. criticism, he manages to retain a robust faith in a form of theism. The records and events of Jewish history are interpreted from the point of view of the author's belief and are utilised as evidence in its support. Whether he succeeds in this formidable task must be left to the reader to decide. Some of the explanations put forward are singularly unconvincing and certain conclusions are open to grave question. God, it appears, exists, and is the source of moral perfection. It is apparently assumed that He is the omnipotent creator of the universe, for it is asserted that "in the great political and social crises the hand of God is seen and His nature and will revealed for all men and all time." This theory cannot be discussed adequately here, we can only observe in passing that such "divine

intervention" is contrary to human experience; it is unknown and unrecognised throughout the sphere of scientific knowledge in general and in that of the scientific historian in particular. Further it would render impossible any natural and consistent science of ethics or indeed any sociology at all, for the simple reason that human efforts towards social amelioration would be liable to be frustrated at any moment by the "divine intervention" of the activities of the deity. The author does indeed admit that "the modern man does not see God as the direct cause of each event."

"The true prophet in every age is he who recognises the presence of God in the events and particularly in the disasters of history and politics, not in miraculous intervention."

There is an extraordinary inconsistency in such a view. If the universe is under the control of an omnipotent interventionist then it is impossible and illogical to eliminate storm, plague, famine, and earthquake or indeed any physical activity from the sphere of his activities. Finally is he or is he not responsible for human action? If he is not, he ceases to be omnipotent and *ipso facto* ceases to be God. If he is, then man is the sport of omnipotence, human will and action are useless and history is a farce. This is, of course, an old difficulty which has beset theism in any form. The second thesis is that by a process of gradual enlightenment, God, having selected the Hebrews as His "chosen people," endeavoured to arouse them to a state of moral consciousness and the purpose which He intended them to fulfil in history, namely to inaugurate a utopian form of society. By their failure to live up to the moral standard ot their prophets, they did not accomplish their destiny and so thwarted the purpose of omnipotence. Comment is needless. The moral is then drawn that only by living the moral life as depicted by the Hebrew prophets can the peoples of Europe escape the destruction that befell Hebrew civilisation, and hence the significance of the title "The Old Testament in the Twentieth Century." We will not pause to discuss this theory, but will rather pass on to matters of greater interest and importance.

At the time when they invaded Canaan it appears probable that the Hebrews had evolved a quite definite belief in a god of war, who was the guardian of their race—not an uncommon conception among primitive peoples. The Canaanites were at the stage of animistic nature worship, "every village, stream, clump of trees and every field had its sacred sources of fertility, its Baals." In a short time the Hebrews also placated these potent forces of agricultural prosperity side by side with the worship of their own God. "History is full of the passing of customs and institutions with the changing of conditions; the attempt to resist such change is always futile, the endeavour to restore the old never succeeds." An excellent axiom, the which may be commended to the notice of its author!

The following shortened extract is significant as showing how the change in the material conditions of the Hebrews produced a definite change in their religious ideas:

"The tribes were separated by deep ravines and rugged mountains each in its little agricultural community. The influence of geography on social life is always potent, and the intense tribalism of the little communities is strictly parallel with that of the Highland clans or the hill tribes of India to-day. Jehovah had in the past manifested Himself solely in national movements and in times of war; in consequence the Hebrews had no particular use for Him under changed conditions." The god was retained in name only, his attributes being revolutionised. First he was "localised alongside the original local Baals." Then he was regarded as fulfilling the function of the old Baal. "Similarly the family reunions, marriages, etc., now celebrated under conditions very different from those of the desert, would tend to take on the colour of the Canaanite festivals of the same character except that the spirit who blessed the occasion would be Jehovah. This was the national War God in a new and peaceful guise. He takes on a domestic, a rustic aspect, and is worshipped in jovial country festival."

An excellent account is given of the founding of the monarchy by David, and the rapid expansion of social com-

plexity under Solomon. Here the economic causes, industrial development and foreign alliances are important features. The establishment "of a circle of great fortresses which, guarding every approach to Palestine, commanded the trade routes. The profitable passage of goods and trade through Palestine from Tyre to the Red Sea was encouraged, a move followed by customs duties on horses and chariots. Jerusalem became a centre of exchange for north and south, and here goods from Phœnicia, Damascus, Persia and Egypt were spread before the astonished gaze of a simple peasantry." These latter soon had other causes for "astonishment" than merely gazing at Solomon in all his glory, and were rapidly deprived of their "simplicity" besides other more material possessions. Solomon acquired "an interest in the merchant fleet on the Persian Gulf." We read of gold and silver in abundance, of ivory, apes and peacocks. Taxes and national debt follow, and the peasantry, "systematically and periodically impressed into slave gangs, a district at a time, build the king's fortresses and palaces for the nobles." An army of public officials, twelve Treasury Lords collect the taxes and a flourishing militarism rounds off the picture. That revolution came as soon as conditions had stimulated the consciousness in the oppressed class was only to be expected. The kingdom is broken into two parts, later to be conquered by Eastern nations and the period closes in exile and desolation. Space does not allow of detailed reference to the evolution of the two little kingdoms, the social gospel of the insurgent prophets, or of the value of the Hebrew literature for the social student. The least useful part of the book is that which the painstaking author evidently regards as the most important—the lesson which Hebrew history has for us to-day. It has a lesson, although it is quite other from from what he conceives it to be, and if we do not read history from the same standpoint as he does, that does not prevent us from appreciating the permanent value of much that he has written, or from recognising that he has done good service to the student who has neither time nor money for more elaborate works on this important subject. H. W. C.

A Real Book

A Week. By Jury Libedinsky. Translated, and with an introduction, by Arthur Ransome (Allen and Unwin, cloth 5s., paper covers 3s. 6d.).

Libedinsky's *Week* is not in the least like other books on the New Russia. It is not like John Reed's famous *Ten Days*, for that is a journalist's pen-picture of the volcanic surge that enabled the Bolsheviks to seize political power. It is not like Philips Price's *Reminiscences*, for that is a careful analysis of the opening years of the Communist revolution. Libedinsky takes up the story after Price has laid it down; and whereas Reed was at headquarters, Libedinsky was at the outskirts. For it is difficult to believe, though *A Week* is a piece of imaginative literature, that Libedinsky's book, no less than John Reed's and Rhys Williams', is anything else than a record of actual experiences.

Imagine yourself, then, in a small town in the Ural foothills, many hundreds of miles from the capital. The time is the melting of the snows in the spring of 1921, before the famine and before the New Economic Policy. The "Week" is the week of a White revolt and its suppression by the Reds. The incidents of this revolt constitute the framework in which are set a number of character types: Communists, good, bad, and indifferent; members of the Extraordinary Commission; White conspirators; insurgent peasants, ignorant, stupid, and infuriated by the corn levy; bourgeois with hatred in their hearts, sullenly silent under the strong hand of the revolution, and spitting venom for a moment when the Whites are temporarily triumphant. Both sides are described with pitiless realism by this young writer who was still a boy in his teens when John Reed was living through the *Ten Days*. So fierce is the light thrown on the seamy side of the revolution that we do not wonder that short-sighted Communists have clamoured for the suppression of Libedinsky's book. But Russians with imaginative insight, like Comrade Buharin, insist that it is splendid Communist propaganda. With the latter view we heartily agree. It is good propaganda for other countries besides Russia. Here in Britain, just as elsewhere, there is

no hope of better days except through the Valley of the Shadow. And it is just as well to realise beforehand that a revolution is not all beer and skittles. We must know this with quite as much conviction as any of the leaders of the Parliamentary Labour Party!

But, apart from political and philosophical speculations, *A Week* is to be valued as a stirring piece of literature. Those who have read it with insight will be better able to understand contemporary Russia, than those who have not read it but have merely spent a few weeks or months in Moscow. We have all heard of the Tcheka, the Extraordinary Commission, but this book will make its readers understand the nature of the Tchekist's grim work in the rapids of revolution. One of the chapters is a letter from a young Communist, written when he is on special service, and is expecting the fate which shortly overtakes him (he is buried alive by the Whites who capture him). In the letter he explains to his chief, Klimin, how he has lost all heart in his work since a certain midnight execution of some of the Whites. Not because of the execution—he had participated in several executions unmoved ere that—but because Klimin had made the prisoners strip naked in the snow before being shot. Clothes were scarce among the Communists, and bullet holes would spoil them. Surikov, the writer of the letter, recognises the cogency of Klimin's reasoning, but his emotional nature revolts.

[One of the present writers recalls having had a similar conflict of feelings many years ago in Manchuria, as he watched a Japanese soldier whose footgear was much the worse for wear, stripping an excellent pair of boots from a Chinese rifleman who had been shot through the head and was breathing his last in the snow!]

Consider, again, the picture of Stalmakhov, the working man who has gradually fought his way through hatred of the bourgeoisie to love of Communism. When the "bloodless revolution" of the spring of 1917 came, Stalmakhov was still in the hating phase: "I was then working as a postman in a little town in the south, . . going from one to another of those snug little houses, listening how those philistine swine rejoiced at the 'bloodless' revolution that had come by accident. I wanted to shout at them, 'It's not your revolution. . . You waited for it with full stomachs, but it found me hungry and cold in the road! . . .' All the well-fed, the bourgeois, the merchants, teachers, doctors, officers, and most of all that cursed ordinary middle-class person—I did my hating in the revolution before I ever started to love."

And later, when he has come to love Communism, he does not know what he is loving: "What it will be like I don't know . . Not long ago I took up a book by a man called Bellamy . . . and I disliked it so much that I did not read it to the end. Very much, too, like what things are now, and I feel that it will be so different that it's hard for us even to imagine it. But when my head is muddled and tired, when work goes badly, when somebody ought to be shot, and sometimes you don't rightly know why, then in my mind I just think my friendly word, Communism . . . and it's as if someone were waving to me with a handkerchief."

There we must leave Stalmakhov, to whom the handkerchief is to wave for only a few hours more before he is captured by the White insurgents, brutally flogged and then shot. There, too, we shall have to leave Libedinsky's book, with the urgent recommendation to all who can get hold of it to read it in Arthur Ransome's splendid translation.

EDEN AND CEDAR PAUL.

THE WORKER-STUDENTS' ENGLISH

English for Home Students. F. J. Adkins (Lab. Pub. Co. 1s. & 2s. 6d.).

This is the book on English promised in the September PLEBS. It is written in a very graphic and entertaining style. There is no wandering into difficult grammatical technicalities; and the examples given are simple every-day examples which are therefore easy to follow.

It is not an English textbook in the ordinary sense, but an introduction to the writing and speaking of correct English, and clears up most of the every day errors in a simple way. But, as

the author says, a regular grammar and a good dictionary are necessary complements to it for a clear understanding of English.

Let me now indicate what I consider to be weaknesses. One piece of advice (p. 12) is not advice for an amateur; it is better to read through one good book at a time on any subject than to jump about from one to another; only the experienced can do that without confusion.

In the sections on *Reading*, *Platform Speaking* and *Writing* there is a wealth of excellent advice which might yet have been improved by a little more detail on the preparation of notes under headings and sub-headings. The space for this could have been taken from the sections on grammar at the end of the chapter. It is in my opinion out of proportion to use up about four and a half pages, in such a small book, with a merely tentative explanation of grammatical errors, pending fuller treatment under the chapter on Grammar proper. Even then the use of "only" —an important point—is not explained fully anywhere in the book.

In the next section on etymology the author is evidently thrown by his reaction against a false theory of education (derived from etymology) into a fantastic explanation of the etymology of the word "education." What root relation, for example, is there between the words *edible*, *edacious* or *esculent* and *education*? One could quite legitimately imagine, from the author's explanation, that Roman nurses ate the children entrusted to their care instead of rearing them. I stick to *duco* (in preference to *edo=I eat*) as the root for *educate*, and trust to modern science for the development of a proper theory of education.

While one can fully appreciate the great difficulties of condensation under which the author must have laboured it is necessary to point out that a point should be either explained or left alone. The elucidation of such points as "the proper noun," the use of "will and shall," "Americanisms," "the idiom of a language," "Foreigners' English," "the law of proximity" (p. 87) and the "flag" example, is either vague or incomplete. There seems also to be an error in fixing the end of a sentence used in the last paragraph of the book.

Nearly all these lapses occur in Appendix B, and, except for the last two, deal with points that are unimportant and I draw attention to them just in case there should be a chance of their elimination or rectification in a future edition.

I can heartily recommend this little book to those who are thoroughly at sea with an ordinary grammar book, and need a simple and safe guide to a more systematic knowledge of their mother tongue; for here the author has gathered together material that, in a grammar, is scattered all over the place.

A. M. R.

SOME CO-OP. PUBLICATIONS

John T. W. Mitchell: Pioneer of Consumers' Co-operation. By P. Redfern (1s. 6d.).

Co-operation in Ireland. By L. Smith-Gordon and C. O'Brien (3s. 6d.).

The Producer's Place in Society. By Robert Halstead (1s.). (All published by the Co-operative Union.)

The first-mentioned is the most recent contribution to the growing literature of Co-operation in this country; the others were issued in 1921. The disturbing clash between the N.U.D.A.W. and the C.W.S., the welcome participation of the former in the I.W.C.E. Movement, as well as the urgent need of understanding the relations between the Co-op. and the industrial and political institutions of Labour, give a special interest to these publications. At present there is a dangerous separation, which bodes ill for both movements.

Mr. Redfern has "written up," as well as his material allowed, the life of Mitchell who headed the opposition against the *producers*, co-operation, championed by E. V. Neale and others. The personal integrity and valuable service of Mitchell to the C.W.S. are beyond doubt, but the underlying story is one of the abandonment by the practical Rochdale flannel-seller and Sunday School teacher of earlier aims of co-operation and its adaptation to the environment of capitalism. The confused nature of his economics—which the Co-op. is still trying to develop in its own separate educational efforts—is well demonstrated in his saying: "Let those who pay the profits get them back." Phrases like these, linked into the simply written narrative of Mitchell's life, provide a more attractive introduction for beginner-students of Co-operation than a larger history would.

Co-operation in Ireland is a useful descriptive account of the forms of co-operation—agricultural credit and trading—adopted in that country. It tells the story of how the British Co-operative Union assisted Sir Horace Plunkett and others to teach the Irish farmers to co-operate. Ralahine is given only a bare mention because the books of E. T. Craig are judged to have given sufficient treatment to this Irish Commune. From personal experience of the complete ignorance of fellow co-operators about this and other early attempts at co-operation between workers as workers in would-be self-contained communities, we think repetition would have been useful. Apart from Belfast, the Co-operative Movement, as we generally understand it in England, has little hold. Inevitably there came a break between the C.W.S.—representing the organised spending power of wage-workers—and Irish agricultural co-operation—formed by small Irish farmers to market their own products, to obtain loans and to buy machinery, seed, etc. [Incidentally Mitchell, as a Rochdale individualist, opposed the moneys of the Co-operative Union being given to assist the Irish landlords.] Agricultural credit societies certainly rescued the farmer from the "gombeen men" and the "capitalising of the poor man's honesty" and the organising of a collective borrowing power under the Raiffeisen system, as described in this book, should not be neglected by any worker-student. However, no serious inroads have been made upon the power of the capitalist banks and the Free State favours State credit rather than any further subsidies to these voluntary organisations.

The last book by Mr. Halstead is a thoughtful plea for a mutual adjustment between the producer and the consumer. Its title suggests that it is a counterblast to the over insistence upon the importance given in Co-operative theory to the consumer's place in society. He suggests guardedly that when every consumer is a producer the problem will be lessened if not entirely removed.

M. S.

SOCIALISM ON THE HIRE SYSTEM

Socialism or Capitalism: Which? (Herbert S. Ockley, 65, London Wall, E.C. 6d.).

This is a full report of the debate in the House of Commons, on the motion moved by Mr. Snowden, asking for "the gradual supersession of the capitalist system." Whatever may be said of the practicability of the idea of legislating the capitalist system out of existence, this debate did arouse considerable interest throughout the country in the question of Socialism. It also brought from the mouths of the Conservative and Liberal M.P.s a general indictment against the capitalist system, although they did not admit as much, but referred to the evils of the system as mere "incidentals" which could be removed without changing the system entirely. The Labour members went further than that,—they wanted Socialism, but exactly what kind of Socialism they wanted is not quite clear. As Mr. Clynes in his speech states—referring to the recent grouping of the railways of the country—that the railways "have been saved by a semblance of Socialism," Mr. Snowden, in opening the debate, made it quite clear that they (the Labour Party) were not in favour of confiscation and that they "proposed no revolution"—which is like asking for plum pudding made without plums!

The only speaker throughout the whole debate, who dealt with the difficulties which the workers would

have to face in their struggle for power, was Mr. J. T. W. Newbold, who emphasised the danger of the Fascisti movement which has developed in all countries where the workers have attempted to take control of the machinery of government. He also dealt with the Labour Party's scheme for the nationalisation of the land, which is to give to the landowners for every £100, after 30 years, £150 in return for their land. The rank and file members of the Labour Party would do well to read this report and then consider whether they desire to obtain their economic and political freedom by this system of payment by instalments.

In the fifteen speeches contained in the report, there is ample material for discussion for any group of N.C.L.C. students who are unable to procure the services of a tutor.

E. V. A.

AMERICAN TRADE UNIONISM

History of Trade Unionism in the United States. By Selig Perlman (Macmillan, 9s.).

This is a good book, though, being printed in America, rather small for 9s. It makes no pretentions to be anything out of the way. It confesses itself to be, in the first half, an attempt to extract a coherent and intelligible story from the vast mass of material in Commons' two volume *History of United States Labour*. The author makes a gallant attempt to be as disinterested as he can, being a University professor. He is not entirely just to the Western Federation of Miners or the I.W.W., and he is rather over-impressed by the importance of the Gompers clique. But on the whole his judgments are correct and marred by very small flaws. He has collected his impressions and interpretations into a separate section at the end of the book. Here he makes errors, but these are of no importance, for his collecting them here has, as it were, drained the rest of the book of his bourgeois prejudices and left the narrative plain, accurate and very nearly (blessed word !) "impartial." It is an unpretentious and readable book which is also authoritative. Though it cannot be compared to the Webbs' *History of Trades Unionism*, it undoubtedly takes front rank in the American literature available over here and entirely replaces the previous sketchy substitutes we have had to use.

R. W. P.

JOINT INDUSTRIAL CONTROL

Representative Government and a Parliament of Industry. By Herman Finer (Fabian Society and Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.).

This book is divided into two parts ; the first critically examines the Parliamentary machine and finds it wanting, the second examines, at some length, the Federal Economic Council in Germany. The author is convinced that in the Economic Council lies the salvation of Parliament, and in both the hope of democracy. He sees a world in which the old conceptions of State and Parliament are challenged by two parties. The capitalist finds that popularity rather than ability is the qualification sought by the politician. As Parliament exercises a more direct control over industry and commerce the need for expert industrial and commercial knowledge makes itself felt. Instead of this need being responded to the capitalist finds his interests discussed inexpertly by rhetorical politicians. Royal Commissions and Inquiries make fitful attempts to bring politics into proper relation with business and finance. The workers, on the other hand, have no real control over the economic life of the country, and having a formal political power which yields little or nothing, they sigh for the first and scoff at the second.

In the light of these criticisms Mr. Finer examines the theory and structure of the Economic Council set up in Germany after the revolution. So far the Federal Economic Council is only provisional and awaits the establishment of the District Councils to be made permanent. The difficulty of establishing Economic Councils seems to have been to reconcile the vocational and territorial conceptions of representation.

Most PLEBS readers will probably disagree with Mr. Finer's conclusions, but they will not fail to find this book stimulating and thought provoking. It is a useful contribution to the study of control in industry, on the one hand, and the theory of Government on the other.

J. B.

LETTERS

As the Dear old "Times" used to put it—We are impelled by the very heavy pressure on our space to request our correspondents to write as concisely as may be consistent with their argument. In other words, for gawdsake make it Snappy.

CHILD EDUCATION

COMRADE,—The letter from E. T. Harris in the September PLEBS, though it may cause one at first to exclaim "Some Job," does nevertheless raise a question of considerable importance. I have often been concerned at the frequency with which the children of active Socialists become not so often muddle-headed mediocrities as violent anti-socialists or drifting ne'er do wells. It is surely important for Socialists to consider well and seriously whether they ought to have children, and if so, how best they can fit them to carry on the workers' struggle.

The Plebs League might consider whether it is worth while gathering together in book-form the best of the knowledge from the large literature on child psychology, education and welfare. Little else can be done in capitalist society, and few of us could carry out the advice such a book could give. For we must realise that the children of Socialists pink and scarlet, well-read or illiterate, are subject to out-of-home influences *at least* as powerful in their *anti*-socialist effect as their at-home, parental influences are *pro*. The education received by the child mind is the resultant of the *total* effect of *all* the impressions made on it when not asleep.

Verily the child is father of the man; and the man is made or marred *before five years of age*. The vast majority of parents are so ignorant of the possibilities and results of the most modern training and treatment of infants (*e.g.* in the Dr. Truby King Hostels); and, what is vastly more harmful, are so sentimental and full of hoary, ridiculous or baneful traditions and beliefs concerning babies that it is no wonder G. B. S. tells us civilisation has reduced us to savagery. The only solution, I am convinced, is for communal creches and nursery institutions where children can live in a child's world under the guidance of skilled, gifted and well-trained nurse-teachers. What a vision a Socialist Society offers us here! But what years before the average "Awdid-ums" type of mother would be educated sufficiently to see the advantages of schools-that-are-homes and homes-that-are-schools!

To return to present-day life. Wherever possible Socialists should collect the necessary Montessori "didactic" apparatus, books, etc., to educate their children at home till they are 10–12 years of age. School attendance officers can be got over if parents can show any qualifications equivalent to those demanded of uncertified teachers in State schools. At 10–12 years the children might be sent to one of the few modern free or Montessori schools (see adverts. in such papers as *The New Era*) or better, to a Socialist private school (see *Proletcult*, by E. & C. Paul).

Never force or even vigorously persuade a child to read *anything*; but novels, stories, etc., inculcating or suggesting Socialist ideas and ideals might be left about for the child to select and browse over. Forced education in Socialist subjects should be left till the child is 16–18 years of age. It should then spring from the child's (or rather youth's) life and work conditions. All true education, to be of value, rests on what the *child* needs and is interested in, not what an adult thinks it is or ought to be interested in. Most ardent Socialists are equally ardent dogmatists and dictators; but the child is the last victim to try dictatorship on. Otherwise he will detest all that Socialism and Socialist means or implies.

MARY HAWKINS.

DEAR COMRADE,—In the September PLEBS, E. T. Harris urges the necessity of books on child upbringing and asks The PLEBS to consider the production of same.

There are already published and obtainable from the Y.C.L., 36, Lambs Conduit Street, under the titles of (1)

The Manual for Leaders of Children's Groups, (2) *The Child of the Workers*, and (3) a work by Prof. Blonskey, *The Work-School*, a treatise on the Russian educational system under Soviet rule, in two volumes. All the excellent suggestions put forward by E. T. Harris are covered in the *Children's Manual* and *The Work-School* and his anticipation of the modern outlook on educational work, concerning the development of individual independence and self-reliance and (2) collective responsibility and obedience, contained in point two of his letter, provide the basis of these inordinately interesting studies. I shall not attempt even to outline within the limits of a short letter the lines laid down for the organisation of the proletarian children in the workers' struggles and the programme put forward in the *Child of the Worker*, or more than mention *The Bulletin for Leaders of Children's Sections*, published as the English edition of *Die Proletarische Kind*, the monthly publication of the E.C. of the Young Com. Int. which carries on work among children in all lands, and reprints suggestions, discussions, and reports.

Yours,

HORATIUS.

SOCIALIST TEACHERS AND THE W.E.A.

DEAR COMRADE,—Mr. Fyfe's account in your current issue of my meeting with the Scottish Socialist Teachers' Society may be representative of the results of the methods of biassed education—it certainly is not accurate. I cannot ask space to correct his misstatements. He appears to attach considerable importance to the Walton Newbold incident. I offered to give my reasons for my action but the meeting was clearly with the Chairman that the question, raised I think by Mr. Fyfe himself, was irrelevant to the discussion. It is quite possible that I smiled at the retort that my reply indicated my character and that of W.E.A. education. There was nothing else to do. At a meeting of the Trades and Labour Council E.C. I gave my deliberative vote against Newbold being invited to the platform of a meeting to celebrate the return of the Labour Members in Glasgow and the West of Scotland at the General Election. My sole reason was that he was not a Labour Member, nor a member of the Party. I said nothing at all about him more than that. I may have been wrong in that view, but I cannot see any proof of an intolerant and unfair character, much less any relation to W.E.A. education. The Council of which I am President endorsed the decision of the E.C. When, last year, the Socialist teachers turned down the W.E.A. it was by the casting vote in addition to the deliberative vote of the then Chairman, who was an S.L.C. tutor and openly hostile to the W.E.A. It never occurred to me to think that his action was intolerant or unfair and reflected on his character. I merely thought his judgment wrong.

If I am right as to the identity of Mr. Fyfe, he is not qualified to pass an opinion on the attitude of the meeting towards either the W.E.A. or myself. If he had waited he would have found, apparently to his disgust, that the W.E.A. had a full share of articulate support, including the Secretary who is also an S.L.C. tutor.

The Teachers cannot have thought me such a bad lot after all, as at the close of the meeting I was booked to address one of their public propaganda meetings on an educational subject!

Yours fraternally,

HERBERT E. N. HIGHTON.

ROBOTS TO DO THE DIRTY WORK?

SIR,—In the *Observer* of September 30, Karel Capek accounts thus for the origin of *R.U.R.*: "Not by any particular feat of imagination at all, but just through feeling very tired and standing a long time in a crowded tramcar. It struck me what a wonderful world this would be if human beings could get somebody less capable of exhaustion to do their work for them. That's all."

Can anybody object to this unless they subscribe to the old-time Toynbee Hall motto: "Blessed are the drudges for they shall inherit culchaw." Do Eden and Cedar Paul really refrain from using any labour-saving devices that come upon the market because they have seen *R.U.R.*?

Surely muddle headedness is fatal to any educational movement; and to encourage emotion resting on such a

base is to steer straight for disaster. If dirt is matter in the wrong place what name can be given to emotion evoked by mistaken intellectual processes? Prostitution seems to me to be a mild name for it.

It is a pity a Frenchman did not write *R.U.R.* The chances of muddle would then have been reduced to a minimum.

Eden and Cedar Paul were encouraged by the proletarian cheers from the gallery of the St. Martin's. I have never yet been able to find that gallery. The pit is the cheapest part and 3s. 6d. hardly a proletarian price. I hesitated long before deciding that the play was worth so much; and now I have seen it I don't think it was. The only real point I carried away was the possible effect of machine invention upon the birth rate.

I realise the value of emotion as the motive power of a movement. But I have a dread of emotion which does not arise from an honest and searching examination of the facts. And surely the facts are sufficient in themselves. To get emotional stimulus from other sources seems to me to be perilously near to dram drinking. A. A.

Revolutionary Education in Britain

Dear Editor,—Eden and Cedar Paul's reply regarding the I.W.C.E. movement to the questionnaire sent in by Henriette Roland Holst, the well-known Dutch left-winger and internationalist, is in my opinion misleading in several respects, which is all the more deplorable because Labour on the continent is in need of accurate information about the British working-class movement—information it seldom gets either from the Third International (British section) or from the re-constituted Second International (the Hamburg "hunchback").

E. and C. P. give the impression that the British Communist Party as an "organisation" is a factor of importance in the Independent Working-Class Education movement; whereas the exact reverse is the case.

Then E. and C. Paul talk of the I.W.C.E. movement being "developed at first to some extent under 'revolutionary syndicalist' auspices." How can anyone speak in this strain when as a fact the movement was developed under the auspices of just ordinary trade unions—the South Wales Miners and the National Union of Railwaymen?

As to Henriette Holst's question 6, she should be informed that the time for outbursts of "emotional fervour" ceased definitely in Britain by the middle of 1919 and that the "calls to Revolution" not infrequently put forward in the Communist Party organ here during the past two or three years have been in every way harmful to the Labour movement. The present epoch demands cool, steady propaganda work, and plenty of it—emotionalism and "hot air" should be buried in the cellar. As for E. and C. Paul's No. 3 reply it surely must be a joke!

What earnest, steady propaganda without "hot air" can do is shown by the fact that the Building Workers and the Distributive Workers have now joined the I.W.C.E. movement, and also by the resolution in favour of I.W.C.E. passed at the recent Labour Party Conference on the initiative of the Blaydon Divisional Labour Party. Of this, as is rightly pointed out in the August issue, every Pleb propagandist should make the fullest use during the coming autumn and winter.

Yours faithfully,

A. P. L.

[While we agree cordially with our correspondent's plea for "cool, steady propaganda work," and are glad that in his opinion the Labour College movement is filling the bill in this respect, we are at a loss to understand why he should hitch these points on to a condemnation of E. and C. Paul's article. That article (which we have just re-read after going through his letter) seems to us, as it did when we published it, to convey, fairly and accurately, the main facts about the present position of the Working Class Educational movement in Britain.—Ed.]

Proletarian Academicism

Comrade Editor,—May I ask why in Heaven's name, in the philosophy section of *What to Read*, Mach, Karl Pearson, J. R. Thompson, and the modern scientific philosophers are summarily disposed of as "Positivists"?

I do not know whether Karl Pearson claims that title for himself or not, but I should imagine he does not claim it in the sense of being a disciple of Comte. At any rate as a title applied to the whole modern school of scientific philosophers (as it would seem to be), including Ostwald, Whitehead, Broad and probably in his latest book, Russell, it seems to me a distinct misnomer, merely indicative of ignorance of these writers. The purported "refutation" of Mach's theory of the elements on pp. 57–8, seems to me a meaningless repetition of irrelevant truisms which Mach himself would readily admit.

I am not a professional philosopher, still less a metaphysician, as the writer of your philosophy section appears to be. (I have no wish to waste time "searching in a dark room for a black hat that is not there.") But I have studied fairly carefully the outlook of the modern scientific philosophers; and to me it seems perfectly clear that their outlook is much the same as that of Dietzgen, except that they have developed it and brought it in line with modern scientific discoveries and modern mathematics. I think, therefore, that modern scientific philosophy should be welcomed by us as the basis of teaching, and not swept aside as a "new metaphysic."

The attitude of the modern scientific philosophers is this: Metaphysical speculation as to the "why" of things and as to ultimate reality is waste of time. Moreover, it usually becomes juggling with words. Any progress we make must be the work of science in correlating experience. The philosophy which determines "the general relations of the special branches of science" (*What to Read*, p. 59), must take as its basis what science takes—a series of sense-impressions. It "*discovers* unity, in multiplicity; it does not *create* this unity *a priori*" (p. 56).

It is very strange that no book of Russell's is recommended except his *Problems of Philosophy*, which is one of his worst books, the opinions expressed in it being now partly abandoned. This is strange since Russell is an exceedingly clear writer. What could be a better introduction to scientific thought than his *Mysticism and Logic*? There are many other grave omissions in what I have heard described by many as the worst section in *What to Read*.

Let us get away from mid 19th century philosophy and academic dissertations on the absolute, and get just a few clear and essential notions about the scientific method and modern science. Academic Philosophy as taught in many of our classes won't help us to win the class war. Much of it is mere verbiage. Two lessons on the essentials of the scientific method would help us a lot in analysing the class situation clearly, and would bring us down from the clouds to reality.

Yours,
M. H. D.

BRIGHTENING UP THE SYLLABUS

DEAR COMRADE.—It was with a feeling of anger that I read R. W. Postgate's criticism of T. Ashcroft's "Brightening Up the Syllabus." Fortunately, my angry feeling softened down to amusement.

To compare Ashcroft's method of reaching the average worker's mind to a silly preaching parson, or to Pollux the sporting tipster of the *Herald*, with his Frank Moran trinity and famous "Mary Ann" acting as a God-head, is nothing short of insult. Ashcroft evidently has had experience of addressing working-class audiences and is anxious to get results. His method is quite good and sound and capable of reaching the mass—a very important thing in propaganda.

Postgate reveals one of his personal weaknesses when he says .... "several comrades who write .... much too much." Let us hope he will take his own advice to heart and dry-dock his fountain pen, particularly when he feels that irritating sensation of "correcting" proletarian teachers on Method. He uses his pen as primitive man used his club. Perhaps his high brow training explains his supercilious attitude.

We will take it for granted that Postgate was pushed out of St. John's College—well, it would do him no harm to get pushed back. His former bourgeois teachers could still brighten him up on points of good behaviour.

Yours fraternally,
P. FITZPATRICK.

NOTES BY THE WAY
for Students and Tutors

Though poppies wave in Flanders' fields

THE pre-war strength of the European armies was 3,700,000 men. In 1923, despite the fact that by disarming Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria a reduction of 700,000 men has been effected, the strength of the armies is stated by Sir Frederick Maurice, to be 4,300,000.

Brevities

Admirers of "the university spirit" are recommended to read the remarks of G. D. H. Cole in *The Highway* (May, 1923). He refers to "the low and slovenly standards of University teaching" and says: "The University teacher who neither understands, nor seeks to understand, our movement and its special needs is a pest and a growing pest."

The Club and Institute Union finds Ruskin College is "non-political" enough and so sends it four students. Yet Ruskin College, "having it both ways," claims to be Labour when it seeks T.U. support.

Inflation

The proposal to Inflate the Currency to end unemployment has provoked a great deal of comment both for and against. What will happen?

(*a*) Prices will go up and industry will be more prosperous. But the workers will suffer a decrease in real wages.

(*b*) All those people with fixed incomes will receive less measured in goods.

(*c*) The £1 will fall in relation to the dollar which will automatically make our tribute to U.S. greater.

Those in "the know" can reap some benefit from raising the prosperity temperature by monkeying with the thermometer. What puzzles us is why so-called Labour economists want to "stabilise" capitalism and discuss inflation from that standpoint.

"Bourgeois"

In response to an inquiry about the exact meaning and derivation of the word "bourgeois," H. G. P. sends us the following:—

The word "Bourgeois" is French, and originally meant the same as the English word "burgess." A burgess or a bourgeois was a member of a burgh or borough, which in the Middle Ages was a fortified town: for burgh means a rock, or a fortification built on a rocky hill, and borough in England used to mean the fortification of a town; for example, Southwark is the Borough of London. that is the fortification on the south side of the Thames.

The burgesses or bourgeois had the freedom of these townships or were members of the gilds there, which meant that they alone had the privilege of buying at wholsesale, and selling at retail prices within that town, except on fair days. In England these organisations stagnated, and gradually became mere shows of obsolete ritual. The Lord Mayor's Show in London is the most obvious example to-day: and the word burgess in English is now only used in conferring the "freedom" of a city on some idol of imperialism.

But the word bourgeois in French came to mean any well-to-do merchant or tradesman; and as the Feudal system lasted on in France, there were three classes—*La Noblesse*, the nobles and the King's Court, supported by taxes, sinecures, etc.; *La Bourgeoisie*, the merchants and shopkeepers, supported by trade; and *La Canaille*. the proletariat, the peasants and jouneymen, supported by their own manual labour.

The French nobles, unlike the English, were not allowed to engage in trade, and therefore could only serve in the army or hang about the Court; they were also exempt from taxation. They had a great contempt for the bourgeoisie, as Moliére's famous comedy

Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme can show. It is the story of how a wealthy bourgeois was fooled because he tried to become a noble; and it is from this attitude of the French nobility, that the word now has a certain derogatory meaning.

It was the bourgeoisie backed by the proletariat who made the French Revolution, and to slur over the difference between the two classes, they called everyone *citoyen*; and to this day the word "citizen" is frequently used by bourgeois writers when they wish to slur over fundamental differences in social status. But in the various French revolutions of the 19th century, the fundamental divergence of the two classes became increasingly obvious, until the Communist Manifesto by using the ordinary current French word made that word the permanent designation of a class.

The Bourgeoisie to-day then, are the shopkeeping and small trading interests, the professional classes and most of the intellectuals and the salariat—in fact all those, who although they are daily duped and cheated by the large capitalists, and therefore dislike them, fear much more the menace to their social status which any real Labour movement must be.

Dollar and Gold Prices

G. L. D., commenting on the reply given in "Class Room Notes" to "Student" who inquired about the relation of the "value of gold" and the "value of the dollar," writes :—

There are one or two interesting sidelights on the question that might profitably be brought out in discussion. Of course to begin with, Dobb was using the popular language of the commercial and financial people when he used the term "value" in each case. In the "City" and on the lips of bourgeois economists the terms "value" and "price" are used very loosely and generally not in the scientific sense in which they are used by Marxists.

Why is this? Because it is to the interests of "bourgeoisdom" to represent the two terms as being practically synonymous, and thus to subtly and continuously keep alive the suggestion that "value" is caused by markets, scarcity and any old thing, rather than that which Marxists know it is due to.

I think the particular footnote in the July issue would have been clearer in meaning if it had read :—"The price of gold, in this country, at present depends upon the rate of exchange with the dollar, which in turn depends partly on the degree of inflation and the level of prices in U.S.A." My alterations to the footnote will give an indication of the other points I wish to bring out. It will be seen that I have eliminated the word "value" in both cases.

The next point is that I narrow the statement down to "this country." I do so because it is conceivable that a country might have a plentiful supply of gold within its own shores, and, in that case the dollar would not concern buyers of gold at all. The position at the present time is that America is the recognised gold market of the world. Most of this peculiar commodity migrated thither during the interesting years 1914—1920. Nowadays if one is buying gold, one goes to New York, just as one's thoughts wander to Billingsgate if it's fish that's being bought. Now when you ask New York for the price of gold, you get it. It's so many "Dollars" per oz. Yes, but we have no dollars, we have pounds (someone has, at least). Very well, you must exchange your pounds for dollars, and the rate is so and so, and every alteration in the rate of exchange makes a difference to the price you pay in English pounds for your oz. of gold, although the price stated in New York in dollars may meantime remain quite stationary.

When all continental countries regain a solvent state, (I said "when"), and gold is once more a free market, rates of exchange will affect the price of gold but little.

Just one last point. Why did I insert the word "partly" in the last part of the footnote as revised by me? Because there are other factors that influence rates of exchange. But that, of course, is another story.

The *Labour Monthly* thanks us for calling attention to "the unfortunate misprint" in Max Beer's selection from Marx's Literary Remains (published in the July *L. M.*). The phrase "Baknuri Cintro's paper" should have been "Bakunin (in his Geneva paper)," and an erratum is to be inserted in the *L. M.'s* bound volume.

ESPERANTO NOTES

The Club, Classes and a Conference

THE Workers' Esperanto Club at the Minerva Cafe has held two successful meetings. W. C. Owen teaches a class for beginners from 6.30 to 7.30. The first discussion was opened by E. E. Yelland on the proposition that: "Procentajo je kapitalo ne estas justa." Plebeians whether "komencantoj" or "spertuloj" would be welcomed any Saturday evening.

The following classes have been started by the Manchester Group of B.L.E.S.: Gorton I.L.P., Tuesdays 8 to 10 p.m. Teacher: J. Coates. Manchester Labour College, Tuesdays, 8 to 10 p.m. Teacher: F. Elder. Openshaw Y.C.L., Mondays, 8 to 10 p.m. Teacher: J. Sulsky. Lack of teachers prevents further classes being started. Glasgow District of S.L.C. run a Class at 24, North Portland Street, Mondays, 8 p.m. Teacher: T. Crawford. Edinboro Classes under the S.L.C. are held at 13 Abercromby Place. Mondays 7.30 p.m. (Advanced), 8.30 p.m. (Elementary). For the Ipswich Class apply W. Frost, The Labour Institute.

At Dewsbury on the 24th of November, in the Socialist Hall, the "Blesanoj nordaj" will hold a Conference. An E.C. member will speak and other meetings are being arranged. For details write: R. W. Burden, 6, Snowdon Street, Batley, Yorks.

La Nova Prezidantino de la T.U.C.

Miss Margaret Bondfield wrote (12/10/23) on receipt of a copy of *Esperanto and Labour* and the *League of Nations Report*: "I am personally delighted to know that Esperanto is making such headway and will make use of the stuff sent."

Kie virino kondukas, viroj sekvu!

A N.U.R. Esperanto League?

During the past two years the *Railway Review* has published articles on the value of an international language as a cultural medium for the workers, and several appreciative letters have been received. In the latest issue (14/10/23) J. H. Watts voices what is to some a genuine difficulty. He objects to the name "Socialist" in the title of B.L.E.S. and urges the formation of a N.U.R. Esperanto League. His attitude, I think, is based on a misconception. Those who are just taking up Esperanto ought to understand clearly that B.L.E.S. is not a hide-bound organisation imposing a social dogma, but a plain league of workers who want to make their fellows realise the possibilities of Esperanto. It has already sub-sections of railway workers, postal workers and teachers.

The Cult of Babel.

Austin Harrison in *Observer* (7/10/23) called attention to the growing language imbroglio. Oddly enough just when air travel has made more meaningless than ever the land barriers, according to him, language barriers have become "an absolute curse." He writes: "Where before 1914 a man [not a wage slave Robot, mark you] could travel comfortably with three languages, to-day he needs at least seven. . . . Formerly English took one everywhere; French helped; German covered all mid-Europe, Russian the whole Eastern side. Try to-day. In many vast zones it is dangerous to speak French aloud. The Ruthenian Russian pretends he does not understand Soviet Russian, and, of course, in all the liberated regions the Tsar's language is taboo. . . . It is dangerous in Transylvania to speak the tongue spoken there for the last 1,000 years. A Pole who fought in the Austrian Army will pretend not to know German. A German under Czech rule speaks German at his peril. . . . All over Europe language clans are rising. Europe is like Gaelic Ireland. The language professor is king."

You would think the moral would be clear but A. H. is only a British Jew-baiter Imperialist and not an internationalist, and he concludes by saying in effect: "Let 'em learn English" which, *according to him*, has no grammar and can be acquired in six weeks!

However, wage-workers, who incidentally have never been able to "travel comfortably with three languages," will remember that there are areas where Mr. Harrison's "kultur" will be as hated as the others he mentions.

BLESANO.

The PLEBS Page

WITH most of the winter classes in full swing (and rain with a cold wind accompanying it in full swing also) it may seem foolish, and perhaps a little optimistic to talk about the Summer School (see advt.) again. Several daring spirits have already sent in their names and our advice is still "book early." Though there be blizzards now, it's going to be very pleasant at Scarboro' next June.

* * *

Through the enterprise of Mark Collins we shall in all probability be able to run a second School, during the second week in August, near Blackpool. Comrade Collins gives glowing accounts of comfortable quarters with the sea at the end of the grounds, lecture room, games and everything in the garden lovely. So Plebeians will be able to make their choice—Whitsun week or August—both at popular sea-side resorts. More of the second School later. Meanwhile plans are afoot for making the week at Cober Hill not only a real school, but also attractive from the entertainment point of view. Play-readings, concerts and, it is whispered, perhaps a play will be forthcoming, and the lectures are to be planned to form a concerted course of instruction that will be really useful to the worker student. Details will be given later and the names of lecturers. The whole idea is to make the week not only a holiday, but a useful part of our educational work.

* * *

In this connection we have had from J. Bailey (late Labour College student), a most excellent suggestion which he is bringing to the notice of his district (Taff and Cynon) of the S.W.M.F.; namely, the granting of two scholarships to the Whit-week School to be awarded to students of the classes. An examination, open only to those who have put in 75 per cent. of possible attendances, will be held at the close of the class session, and the scholarships awarded to the two best students.

The expenses to the district have been carefully worked out, rail fare, board and lodging at Cober Hill, and a small personal allowance being included. We recommend the scheme to other comrades, and compliment Comrade Bailey on his organising ability.

TO LEAGUE MEMBERS.

Please note that nominations for 1924 Executive Committee should be sent in now. Each nomination must be accompanied by the names of two members of the League. Also please note we have no honorary members —you are not a member if you haven't sent us one shilling (1s.) this year 1923!

A PLEBS WHIT WEEK SCHOOL

will be held at

Cober Hill Guest House, Cloughton, Scarborough

June 7th to June 14th, 1924

Full particulars next month—meanwhile think about it and decide quickly.

***Terms*: £3 3s. per week. 10s. deposit must be paid when you book. Instalment payments if desired—7s. 8d. per month for seven months.**

We will book it all up for you and take care of your money!

PLEBS Office, 162a Buckingham Palace Rd., London, S.W.1

National Council of Labour Colleges Directory

The undernoted list of addresses is given in order that any omissions or corrections may be sent on to Head Office immediately and so that PLEBS readers may all know the address of the nearest Labour College. The Directory does not include the addresses of the following affiliated organisations :—The A.U.B.T.W., the N.F.B.T.O., the N.U.D.A.W., the Labour College, London, and The PLEBS League. The address of the Educational Organiser is followed by names and addresses of Local Secretaries.

General Secretary ..	J. P. M. Millar ..	..22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.
	DIVISION I.	
Educational Organiser ..	G. Phippen..	..11a, Penywern Rd., Earlscourt, London, S.W. 5.
London Council for I.W.C.E.	G. Phippen..	..(as above)
Woolwich Dist. for I.W.C.E.	.G. Shiercliffe	..5 Anglesea Av., Woolwich, S.E. 18.
	DIVISION II.	
Educational Organiser	..D. Wyndham Thomas	..35, Crescent Grove, South Side, Clapham Common, S.W. 4.
	DIVISION III.	
Educational Organiser	..Mark Starr..	..100, Grosvenor Rd., London, S.W. 1.
Norwich Council for I.W.C.E.	A. A. Segon	..41, Stafford St.
Colchester ,, ,, ,,	W. W. Calthorpe	..5, Parsons Heath, Harwich Rd.
Braintree ,, ,, ,,	H. Kymer ..	..20, Grenville Rd.
Brentwood ,, ,, ,,	A. E. Bright	..48, Wellesley Rd.
Southend ,, ,, ,,	J. Jones ..	..11, Portland Av.
Cambridge ,, ,, ,,	W. Morell ..	..40, Catharine St.
	DIVISION IV.	
Educational Organiser	..W. J. Owen	..13, Waengaen St., Cwm. Celyn, Blaina, Monmouth.
Cardiff & Dist. L.C. ..	..G. James ..	..71, Wyevern Rd., Cathays, Cardiff.
Barry L.C.	..W. Griffiths	..81, Princes St., Barry Dock.
Swansea L.C.	..W. Higginson	..15, Pwll St., Landore.
	DIVISION V.	
Educational Organiser	..F. Phippen ..	..23, Talbot Rd., Knowle, Bristol.
Bristol L.C.	..M. Evans ..	..8, Ardley Terr., Crofts End, St. George.
Gloucester L.C. ..	..R. F. Tiley	..75, Rosebery Av., Gloucester.
Plymouth & Dist. L.C.	..G. S. West ..	..7, Waterloo St., Plymouth.
Taunton L.C.	..A. W. Lovey	..2, Salisbury Terr., Kingston Rd., Taunton.
	DIVISION VI.	
Educational Organiser	..T. D. Smith	..12, Old Meeting St., W. Bromwich, Birmingham.
Worcester L.C. ..	..W. L. Huckfield	..298, Astwood Rd., Worcester.
	DIVISION VII.	
Educational Organiser	..J. W. Thomas	..4, Saxon St., Halifax.
Derby & Dist. L.C. ..	..W. A. Glenn	..78, May St., Derby.
Mansfield & Dist. L.C.	..W. T. Paling	..35, Tudor St., Sutton-in-Ashfield, Notts.
Yorks Council of L.C.s	..J. W. Thomas	..4, Saxon St., Halifax.
Hull & Dist L.C. ..	..W. Raglan ..	..264, Boulevard, Hull.

West Riding Council ..	..F. Dixon ..	..49, Delph Hill, King's Cross, Halifax.
Bradford & Dist. L.C.	..J. Backhouse	..17, Westbourne Rd., Manningham, Bradford.
Castleford L.C. ..	..Geo. M. Bellwood	..20, Glebe St., Castleford.
Dewsbury	..C. Ragan ..	..1, Back Marriot St., Dewsbury.
Farsley	..G. Yeadon ..	..13, Low Bank St., Farsley, nr. Leeds.
Halifax L.C.	..Arthur Taylor	..23, Exeter St., Salterhebble.
Horsforth	..	
Huddersfield	..W. Shaw ..	..12, Rose St., Tiern Bridge, Huddersfield
Leeds L.C.	..T. H. Wormald	..1, Cross Dawlish Grove, York Rd., Leeds.
Sheffield L.C.	..S. H. Cree ..	..21, Brathay Rd., Sheffield.
Spenborough	..Miss J. Hurst	..12, Edward St., Knowler Hill, Liversedge.
West Vale	..H. Mitchell	..176, Rochdale Rd., Greetland, Halifax.

DIVISION VIII.

Educational Organiser	..J. Hamilton	..11, Channell Rd., Fairfield, Liverpool.
Liverpool & Dist. L.C.	..J. Hamilton	..11, Channell Rd., Fairfield, Liverpool.
Accrington L.C. ..	..R. Pickersgill	..45, Devonshire St., Accrington.
Barrow-in-Furness L.C.	..R. Purcell ..	..15, Walton Lane, Abbotsmead, Barrow-in-Furness.
Blackburn L.C. ..	..H. Crossley..	..64, Chapel St., Rishden, nr. Blackburn.
Burnley L.C.	..Granville Holt	..116, Rectory Rd., Burnley.
Fleetwood & Dist. ..	..H. Brownjohn	..5, Styan St., Fleetwood, Lancs.
Preston L.C.	..Mrs. C. S. Taylor	..17, Rose Terr., Ashton-on-Ribble, Preston.
S.E. Lancs. Area Council	..E. Redfern	..1, Langdale Av., Reddish, Stockport.
AltrinchamCouncilforI.W.C.	E. J. Whinfield	..62, Brunswick St., Altrincham, Cheshire.
Ashton-under-Lyne ..	..R. Waters ..	..82, Furnace St., Dukinfield, Ashton-under-Lyne.
Leigh & Dist. L.C. ..	..J. Brett ..	..47, Lord St., Leigh, Lancs.
Manchester L.C. ..	..H. Ingle	..32a, Dale St., Manchester.
Oldham L.C.	..T. Philbin ..	..7, Court 1, Egerton St., Oldham.
Rochdale & Dist. L.C.	..A. Fletcher	..29, Dane St., Rochdale

DIVISION IX.

Educational Organiser	..W. Coxon ..	..5, Byron St., Newcastle.
North Eastern L.C. ..	..W. Coxon ..	..5, Byron St., Newcastle.
Darlington & Dist. L.C.	..E. Turner ..	..103, Waterloo Rd., Middlesbrough.

DIVISION X. (Scottish Labour College).

National Educational Organiser	J. P. M. Millar	..22, Elm Rd., Edinburgh.
National Secretary ..	..S. Walker ..	..114, Dunchatten St., Dennistoun, Glasgow.
Aberdeen Dist. ..	..W. Morrison	..323, Holburn St., Aberdeen.
Ayrshire Dist. ..	..J. Kerr ..	..Cadgers Rd., Hurlford, Ayrshire.
Dundee Dist.	..S. A. Ross ..	..4, Mollison St., Dundee.
Edinburgh Dist. ..	..John Millar	..30, Newhaven Rd., Leith.
Fifeshire Dist. ..	..National Organiser.	
Glasgow Dist.	..J. Wood ..	..54, Albert Rd., Crosshill, Glasgow.

Greenock Dist. ..	..E. Wilson ..	..41, Nelson Rd., Gourock.
Lanarkshire Dist. ..	..Mrs. Aitken	..Greenvale, S. Nimmo St., Airdrie.
Lerwick	..	
Stirlingshire Dist. ..	..T. Bain ..	..66, Kerse Rd., Grangemouth.

DIVISION XI. (Ireland).

Educational Organiser	..c/o J. P. M. Millar..	22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

THE N.C.L.C. AND ITS WORK

THE pessimist who feels that the I.W.C.E. movement is in a rut in many corners of the country would get a shock if he could read the correspondence reaching Head Office. Letter after letter indicates the enthusiasm with which the organisers and the local Labour Colleges are throwing themseves into the task of extending the area under "class-cultivation" and in organising the new Divisional Councils. Apart from the essential work of re-organisation on more developed lines, one of the great jobs of the year will be to make the A.U.B.T.W. and the N.U.D.A.W. schemes an outstanding success. This is the work of the Divisions.

The N.C.L.C. E.C. has now prepared Correspondence Courses (see below) which will all be dealt with from Head Office to allow the Divisional Organisers to concentrate on (1) the class work, and (2) the attracting of local financial support from the working-class movement.

It will interest all N.C.L.C.ers to know that Mr. George Hicks of the A.U.B.T.W., and Mr. Hodgetts, of the N.U.D.A.W., are now members of the N.C.L.C. executive. Our old friend, J. W. Thomas, has been appointed by the Executive as full-time Educational Organiser for Division Seven (see Directory) and it is up to the local Labour Colleges to make full use of his assistance. Attempts have been made in this Division to utilise the Miners' Welfare Fund for I.W.C.E. purposes, but it appears that the coalowners are likely to be successful in saying "No." Nevertheless, the campaign among the miners has prepared the way for the steps now being taken, with the assistance of Head Office, to get the Yorks Miners' Association to consider the question of an N.C.L.C. Educational Scheme. Every miner-student in the Yorkshire area should get busy in his Branch giving the Miners E.C. a mandate to take up a scheme. But—please keep Organiser Thomas informed! The Yorks. Managers' and Overlookers' Executive has made a grant of £20, conditional on certain classes being provided.

In Division Four things are decidedly on the move and Organiser Owen and the men from Cardiff, Swansea and elsewhere are running Day Schools as well as classes. There is every prospect of a strong and active Divisional Committee that will bring South Wales back to its old strength. The step now required is that the S.W.M.F. Educational Committee should affiliate to the N.C.L.C. and should thereafter appoint a representative to the Divisional Council. What have the miners to say to this?

In Division Eight, Barrow Labour College—the only one that received a grant from the State educational machine last year—passes on an interesting cutting which reads, "The Board of Education state, in reference to the proposed evening schools in Barrow, that, on the information at present before them, they are not prepared to approve the payment of grant in aid of the classes organised by the Independent Working-class Education Society." All over the country the W.E.A. classes get grants, in some places the Authority actually runs the classes, as in Edinburgh. Why the difference in treatment? Ask any pre-historic trade unionist who supports the W.E.A.

Returns from North-Eastern and Darlington Labour Colleges in Division Nine, from Sheffield in Number Seven, and from Number Three indicate that there are no cobwebs growing on the movement there. When are the North-

umberland and the Durham Miners having an N.C.L.C. educational scheme ? There is an attempt being made at D.M.A. Council in November to send four students to the Labour College (London) which we hope will meet with support from every lodge delegate.

In Division Five, Organiser F. Phippen and the Plymouth, Gloucester and Bristol Labour Colleges are making the South-West look up, while in Division One, the London Council is in the midst of a big winter campaign for which recruits are wanted. Organiser Smith, in Number Six, and Organiser D. Wyndham Thomas, in Number Two, can also do with assistance. Write them.

Up in Scotland, Number Ten, the Building and Monumental Workers Union has resolved at its conference to affiliate to the Scottish Labour College while the Scottish Trades Union Congress has also affiliated, and has appointed its Secretary, W. Elger, as its representative on the National Committee. Glasgow District S.L.C. had a record conference of over 280 delegates with James Maxton, M.P., and J. T. Walton Newbold, M.P., as speakers. Glasgow has opened at least twenty-three winter classes. Lanarkshire District Committee has appointed J. D. McDougall as full-time tutor for the winter, has received £50 from the Lanarkshire Miners' E.C., together with a recommendation to the Miners' branches to affiliate, and has thirteen classes running. Edinburgh District still keeps its end up with twenty-eight winter classes, public lectures and many new affiliations. Further north, Aberdeen District is hard at work with D. S. Browett as tutor.

New correspondence Courses are available on Industrial History, Economics, English Grammar and Essay Writing. Free to N.U.D.A.W. and A.U.B.T.W. members under their Union Educational Schemes. For others, fee for course of twelve lessons 21s., payable in advance, or 1s. to enrol and 2s. for the correction of each essay. Write, General Secretary, N.C.L.C., 22, Elm Row, Edinburgh.

IS YOUR UNION HERE ?

Any number of Unions are ripe for N.C.L.C. educational schemes, but most E.C.s will quite naturally only move if they feel sure that the members want I.W.C.E. It is therefore up to those who do want an educational scheme to get a move on and to do so in an organised way. The following are doing what they can. Give them a hand and keep them advised. And is *your* Union here ? If not, will you act as secretary of your " occupational group ? "

National Painters' Society.—Mark Collins, 23, Rhondda Place, Halifax.

N.U.G.W.—J. D. Walmsley, 60, Mercer Street, Newton-le-Willows, Lancs.

A.S.W.—M. R. Ray, 47, Rose Valley, Unthank Road, Norwich.

Scottish Painters' Society.—W. Morrison, 323, Holborn Street, Aberdeen.

Workers' Union.—Miss A. Crabtree, 1, Tyson Street, Halifax.

Boot and Shoe Operatives.—A. Segon, 41, Stafford Street, Norwich. (Action in this Union needed promptly, as at its last conference a proposal in favour of the W.E.T.U.C. was only shelved until the T.U.C. decisions were known.)

Assoc. Blacksmiths and Iron Workers.—J. Wilson, 27, Waverley Terrace, Motherwell. (Revision of rules now takes place—get busy.)

A.E.U.—C. F. Booth, " Sonoma," Leasowe Road, Wallasey, Liverpool. (Has an I.W.C.E. Rule but still supports Ruskin. Up to branches to inquire why.)

Transport and General Workers Union. North : H. H. Brown, 2, Major Cross Street, Widnes, Lancs. *South* : W. J. Sturrock, 8 Blake Road, Canning Town, E. 16.

National Union of Railwaymen. North H. H. Thompson, 8, Devonshire Walk, Carlisle.

U.P.W.—J. B. Barney, 43, Sydney Rd., Stockwell, S.W.9.

Pattern Makers.—" Pattern Makers," c/o PLEBS Office, 162A, Buckingham Palace Road.

Labour College (London) Students' Association

The members of the L.C.S.A. particularly those residing at the College during the last two years were grieved to hear of the unfortunate accident to Comrade Mrs. Percy Sephton *nee* Jean Dott. It is as the latter we think of her still for she was only married during the last few weeks of the final term. I have written Comrade Sephton extending the deepest sympathy on behalf of the comrades of the L.C.S.A.

It takes some time for a new batch of students to adapt themselves to the new conditions and become acquainted. It is good to hear of the activities of the students who returned last year, the majority of whom are conducting classes in their districts. The industrial slump has left a depressing atmosphere but the desire is still strong for classes upon the subjects taught at the Labour College.

Congratulations to Alan Johnson, who was married on the 29th September. We wish him a successful future activity in double harness.

The discussion in the *Daily Herald* upon Education has been interesting. The desire for impartial education is perhaps the most amusing example of intellectual confusion. I am sure that the readers are still anxious to know of what impartial education consists. It is fairly evident that many of the writers have no conception of what Education should be. The PLEBS must be scattered broadcast. The education meted out by the ruling class is so obviously partial that even the milk and water Socialists admit it.

Regarding the inquiry mentioned in last months PLEBS: The September minutes of the N.U.R. Executive Committee state that three representatives have been elected to represent the N.U.R. on the inquiry into the Labour College. It now awaits a move on the part of the S.W.M.F.

A. G. E.

The PLEBS Bookshelf

The Rumour. A Play, by C. K. Munro (Collins, 5s.).

AFTER Toller and Capek comes C. K. Munro, as one of the most brilliant of the younger modern dramatists (and this time a Britisher), to provide us with such good material that no local College or Class Council can afford to neglect it for its play-reading circle. The next edition of the *Outline of Imperialism* must certainly have *The Rumour* in its booklist. It is a magnificent and effective satire upon modern capitalism and the means and motives of the wars which must accompany capitalist expansion. It is significant that while the same author's *At Mrs. Beam's*—a much slighter effort—continues to run in London, *The Rumour* has only been privately played.

The story of the play is woven around the fate of two small (Balkan ?) nations. These two countries, Przimia (pronounced Shimia) and Loria are finally involved in war by the rumour that each intends to attack the other. Przimia has already been capitalised, but Loria refuses to become transformed into a Lancashire. So she has to be forced. British capital sets the ball rolling and the scenes of the play portray all the incidents until the "noble allies" are quarrelling among themselves about the dividing of the spoils. Not a feature of modern capitalism is forgotten: the man of "big business," bent on saving from themselves "a set of dirty lousy people" who have sat down "on one of the most developable pieces of God's earth and prevent any capital being sunk in it"; the hideous ghoul—the stock speculator—who uses the occasion to get the central control of power that enables him incidentally to end the war by forcing the armament mongers to cut off the supply of munitions to Loria; the young British diplomat, acting as the hack of vested interests and anxious that the

[illegible] for themselves, and the ordinary man in the street, a clerk—[illegible] All these characters appear and re-appear.

The most unforgettable scenes are those in which successive deputations from the Federation of British Industries and the Trades Union Congress interview the Prime Minister. A faked atrocity story about the murder of an English girl is the ostensible reason for the former demanding British intervention; but the spokesmen forget their text, and again and again lapse into more familiar details of the coal, railways and capital involved. Threats are used so openly that the wily Prime Minister faced with a possibly hostile Press and a cessation of credit facilities and payments to the Party funds—has no choice.

What he has to do in the next scene is to bluff the deputation from the Trade Union Congress which comes to announce a general strike if intervention takes place. Beneath the well worn phrases of the Labour leaders about a "capitalist conspiracy," he discovers and appeals to their latent patriotism; again, if the Lorians destroy Przimia, will not unemployment be increased by the destruction of a market for goods made by British workers?

Then, in a final scene which recalls Versailles, the "peacemakers" are [illegible] fixing their new boundaries [illegible] all the coveted mineral and fuel supplies. The "noble allies," in the name of reparations, hope to be able to introduce into Przimia huge squads of cheap Lorian labourers. But the Przimian Government objects. When the haggling and animosity are at their height, the Przimian representative has to go out to speak from the balcony to the enthusiastic crowd, and he links arms with the British and French representatives, who from the "greedy villains" of the council chamber are again transformed into "noble allies" solely intent on the "welfare of the Universe." As the quarrelling is resumed again inside, the Press photographer calls a halt to photograph the great men making their solemn league and covenant and each of them assumes "the kind of attitude each thinks the world would expect from him."

The play is obviously born of the disillusionment of the last War's aftermath. Its subject matter is great and alive and, while it has no open message, its biting, incisive criticism of the features of capitalism in decay can be well used by us for propaganda purposes. Why not conclude all lecture courses on Imperialism by a reading of this play? It would be well worth while.

Plebs interested in good plays will also make a note of the fact that Messrs. Benn are issuing a cheaper edition of Ernest Toller's drama of the Luddite movement, *The Machine Wreckers* (reviewed by J. F. H. in our May issue) at 3s. 6d.

M. S.

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